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**Mai hē tātou e haka 'ite nei ki te nāpoki:**

**A collaborative story of indigenous knowledge in a school  
setting in Rapa Nui**

A thesis

submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

of

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at

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by

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## **Abstract**

This research explores the stories of indigenous educators in Rapa Nui, and their engagement with the development of Rapa Nui language and culture in the primary school curriculum. It is suggested that indigenous education in the island has promoted considerable agency in the development of national intercultural policies, emphasizing the resourcefulness they have had in doing so. This will be discussed in the case of an indigenous education programme that has been worked through to allow Rapa Nui children to learn in their native language, focusing on the participation that school teachers, staff and parents have in this endeavour. Positioning myself as a non-indigenous researcher, I am interested in following up on concerns discussed by theorists of decolonization, as a response to Western determination of what constitutes research; particularly in indigenous communities. This concern is reflected in the question that the research addresses, namely how intercultural education in Rapa Nui may or may not allow a forum for indigenous children on the island to develop a culturally responsive education.

The thesis narrates the conception and implementation of indigenous education in Rapa Nui in a school setting. The experience of the participants highlights the need to recognize the asymmetry that has characterized intercultural relations at school throughout the history of formal education in the island. Further, they point to a revitalizing concept of culture to create a curriculum based on the Rapa Nui knowledge tradition. By giving space to this knowledge, it in turn implies a challenge to the existing educational frameworks. Responsibility over language revitalization and enhancement of local knowledge has gradually been positioned in school, and reflection on this work highlights the need to develop strategies that involve the wider society (local and national) in creating a renewed space for indigenous knowledge.

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To my family and the families I have made along the way...

*“This question is one that only a very old man asks. Does this path have a heart? All paths are the same: they lead nowhere. They are paths going through the bush, or into the bush. In my own life I could say I have traversed long long paths, but I am not anywhere. Does this path have a heart? If it does, the path is good; if it doesn’t, it is of no use. Both paths lead nowhere; but one has a heart, the other doesn’t. One makes for a joyful journey; as long as you follow it, you are one with it. The other will make you curse your life. One makes you strong; the other weakens you...”*

*For me there is only the traveling on paths that have heart, on any path that may have heart, and the only worthwhile challenge is to traverse its full length, and there I travel looking, looking breathlessly.”*

“Las Enseñanzas de Don Juan”. Carlos Castañeda (1968)

In memory of the work of Hilaria Tuki Pakarati

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## Chapter 1. The research and the researcher

### Finding “[y]our own”

This story is not about me, but it is my story. I do not just want to play with words, but also acknowledge my position as a researcher and storyteller. This story gives me a responsibility and a goal, which is inextricably linked to my own previous experience, the pathways I chose and the questions I set out to resolve. Along the way I have encountered many people who made me question these goals, and reflect on my responsibility. With and through others, I have endeavoured to create a written story of the participants’ knowledge and understandings in the realm of Rapa Nui<sup>1</sup> culture and education. This knowledge is understood as subjective, however it appeals to the reality that arises from the crossing of subjectivities. In this direction, my thesis attempts to approach the space of the ‘intersubjective’, and construct dialogues that enable further discussions.

Truth, in this perspective is only accessible through situating my own “passionate, subjective approach”, as Marsden (1992) states referring to Māori views of truth, is the only “route to Māoritanga” (p. 118). He viewed Māoritanga as the corporate views “that Māoris hold about ultimate reality and meaning” (1975, p. 144); highlighting the collective responsibility of Māori people in defining what is true for them. In a similar sense, my route has led me to a passionate approach, however, in a different search, for a different truth. The best way I can explain this for the moment, is by telling you a little bit about myself, and how I came to be interested in the story of indigenous education in Rapa Nui.

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis, I will follow on the assertion made by Young (2012) for the use of “Rapa Nui” to refer to the culture, language, and people; as well as the island. He argues that using the two words “is consistent with other Polynesian languages, where “nui” is typically represented as a distinct word.” Moreover, “the shift from using a different spelling—‘Rapanui’—for the people, language, and culture of the island, also avoids implying a separation between these and the island itself” (p. 22).



This story is a collaborative story of many. My story integrates the different voices and stories of those who constitute it. It is the story of a research project that stemmed from my experience of living in Rapa Nui as a 'tira' (lit. Chile) community member on the island. It was as a story, that this project began to form in my mind, and as it turned out, that the path of research became.

When I arrived to Rapa Nui with the idea of doing some work there, it had been four years since my last (which was also my first) visit. In that timeframe I had decided to study Social Anthropology in Santiago, Chile. Unfortunately, the 'Test of Academic Aptitude' I had to sit through – as every other student in Chile<sup>2</sup> - to earn my place in a public University, did not give me the score I needed. However, I applied again the following year, and when I 'successfully' finished my coursework, I was meant to look for a place to do my undergraduate thesis. At the time, the idea seemed to come from nowhere, and I would eventually discover that 'it all made sense'... I soon decided to go back to Rapa Nui and find out if there was any possibility of research in the broader educational field.

After my first visit, I had sent some books, magazines, threads and beads to the family that had hosted me there previously, in an attempt to acknowledge their hospitality and show my gratitude. This was done without a further exchange of words, beyond receiving a postcard, and some traveller friends.

Time had passed, and I arrived as before, without warning, to the same land, to the same house, hoping that the family there would still remember me. And when I sat next to Tiare, a day of August 2005, I realized that my hope had not been in vain. She said - as she was threading small shells onto

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<sup>2</sup> Prueba de Aptitud Académica (PAA) in Spanish, today has been reformed into the "Test for University Selection" (PSU; Prueba de Selección Universitaria) is a nationwide compulsory test to apply for tertiary study.

the necklaces she was making - that she remembered me well and that three days earlier she had dreamed about me. There she was with the beads and the fastenings I had sent years ago, threading with the pipi, and the pure shells to form necklaces that would travel the world; and her hands, open to receive me.

So I started to get to know and make myself known in this family space, to which I came back to as a 'chica tire' (woman from Chile) six months later, with the intention of beginning some research on culture and education in Rapa Nui. At the time, I was interested in understanding how Rapa Nui indigenous knowledge was 'successfully' transmitted throughout generations. I thought that if I could identify 'pedagogical techniques' that allowed the 'successful' socialization of girls and boys in their culture; then that knowledge could be used to improve the cultural responsiveness of the school's pedagogy. That initial intention began to change. I realized that there was not just one way of defining what successful meant, I encountered difference, contradiction and diversity. I understood that learning culture is education, but also that culture was, mostly, not taught through school. There was no previous research in the area of family education in Rapa Nui; so at this point my initial intentions seemed to diffuse in this broad and shapeless world. So I tried to understand it, and I focused on the family. It was a crucial starting point: a place to live, a space in Hapa Roa.

This space later became my home. The experience of living and researching in Rapa Nui led me to reflect on my own identity, my family history. The sense of belonging that Rapa Nui culture was able to provide for their own was a positive surprise, coming from an urban community where the meaning of national identity was certainly not something easy for me to relate to. From living in the hectic, diverse and segmented capital of Chile, I 'escaped' to the island where everything was 'kind of shared'. There I learned about my own culture, and how hard it was for me to grasp a comprehensive concept of what being a Chilean is; what is different? What

is similar? The need to take a position to relate to in everyday life encounters was strong, especially when being Chilean carries with it a historical weight that is hard to forget in Rapa Nui.

These questions led to a better understanding of 'my own' identity and the spaces available to me on the island as a *tire*. I eventually found myself questioning how this particular Chilean nationality, or 'imagined community' in terms of (Anderson, 1983) contributed – or not – to my positive identification with others. I was born to a Palestinian family, on my fathers' side; while my mothers' family descends from a yet unresolved genealogy with European naming. Considering my rather unclear 'cultural belonging', my experience in the island of Rapa Nui certainly brought me towards a search for understanding of the transmission of culture, identity and belonging. In this direction, my undergraduate thesis pointed towards a wide-ranging consideration of the educational process and the part it plays in society.

Through the narratives of Rapa Nui participants in my undergraduate research, I focused on change and continuance in the last fifty years in extended family education (*hua'ai/ivi*<sup>3</sup>). This historical approach allowed me to see a perspective of how the child-rearing strategies that parents described to me were influenced by their own life experience as children. In this regard, formal education had left – especially in the eldest generations – a repeated taste of frustration in their memories. Furthermore, the actualization of that frustration in parents was not so rarely expressed as a heightened concern for enabling their children to be successful in the formal education scheme; which prominently included the decision of communicating with them in Spanish (Zurob, 2009b).

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<sup>3</sup> Hua'ai refers to the extended family in Rapa Nui language. It is fairly accepted that this word has a Tahitian origin, and according to C. Hereveri (in Muñoz, 2007, pp. 37-38) the equivalent in Rapa nui would be the ancient *ivi*, the patrilocal families of the former *mata* (tribe). Today, *hua'ai* is used to refer to family groups, usually considered as the 'offspring of someone'; the eponymous ancestor (McCall, 1976) of the kinship structure.

At the time, I defined education broadly, using the words of Margaret Mead, one of the precursors of cross-cultural studies. She considered education to be “the cultural process, the way in which each newborn human infant... is transformed into a full member of a specific human society, sharing with the other members a specific human culture” (1943, p. 633). I was interested in stating that education is supposed to provide young people with knowledge about how to live in their society. However, the rather idealized view of Mead, where ‘each newborn human infant’ is transformed into a ‘full member of society’ did not quite fit with my findings.

Over time, I came to believe that in an indigenous setting, formal education must include consideration of indigenous ways of being in order to be meaningful for them. Yet, over the last century formal and compulsory institutions have increasingly assumed the weight of what is meant by education, gradually displacing the socializing role of family with that of school, kindergarten and nursery. This can be understood as ‘planned learning’ experiences. Ideological reduction of education to the formal realm (Oliver, 1998) and centralist education systems have entailed that what guides the contents and methods of pedagogic practice loses connection with the particular environment that supports it. These formal educational experiences do not outweigh the influence of family education in young people, but through my experience in Rapa Nui I recognised it had introduced deep changes in the way families perceive their own knowledge and their responsibility in the educational process of their children.

In Rapa Nui, the schooling process that began in 1914, has regarded Rapa Nui indigenous knowledge and language as an impediment to the possibility of achieving social and economic power through academic success. The asymmetric interactions and the frustration that emerges in this contact enforce the Rapa Nui interest to speak the ‘Big Brother’ language (Fishman, 2001), in this case Castilian Spanish. As new knowledge

comes into play, family relationships within the hua'ai lose centrality and legitimacy, leaving the elders without knowledge resources to participate in the training of children (Zurob, 2009b). Furthermore, their past references are ignored and even rejected in the new context, and what is right, becomes decided by the 'wise men' of modernity, that is, the 'experts'.

Formal education in the context of Rapa Nui is subject to content and methods decided on Chilean mainland. Until 1996, the Chilean state promoted a national curriculum that distinguished specific contents to be taught across its 4,329 kilometres of wide cultural, ethnic and geographic variability. 3,800 kilometres towards the west, sits Rapa Nui, under the same guidelines, emphasizing a Western tradition of national orientation; marked by standardized content that epitomizes the control and forms of coercion of the Nation State.

Yet the perspective of parents and local community members is utterly different to this "one-size-fits-all" model: each community, village, or city supports various forms of cultural education as well as a diversity of values that support education. The formal education system's inability to acknowledge cultural variability ultimately results in "the reproduction of a heterogeneous demand for a homogeneous formal educational provision. This prolongs and intensifies disparities, so that class or ethnic differences are reproduced and end up jeopardizing the desired equity" (Hopenhayn & Ottone, 2000, p. 112).

It could be said that the current situation of formal education in Chile is still undermining indigenous cultural knowledge and family education. This is one of the core issues for meaningful intercultural education currently. It is into this space that this research speaks. It gives practical value to educational experiences that are rooted in local realities.

Within this dichotomy, interesting initiatives have arisen. In Rapa Nui intercultural bilingual education has been promoted with the aim of "improving learning achievement, through strengthening ethnic identity of children in contexts of cultural and linguistic diversity" (PEIB, 2005). While intercultural education policies in Chile have started to recognize the necessary participation of indigenous communities in formal education and curriculum planning (PEIB, 1996)<sup>4</sup>, the lack of bridging strategies for parents to get involved in these issues becomes more evident; and these policies continue to be developed and enacted through central institutions.

A critical approach to indigenous education policies in Chile claims that language and culture should not only be admitted as valid content in education, but primarily as a way that enables people to construct a meaningful path of engagement with the contemporary reality of their own culture, and therefore inspire sovereignty within the individual and the cultural group (Montecinos, 2004). In fact, the importance of continuity between school and home in the learning process has been highlighted both by academic research and public policies (Hohepa, May, & McCarty, 2006; Macfarlane, Glynn, Grace, Penetito, & Bateman, 2008); however, actual strategies to achieve this must be developed in relation with specific places, human groups and cultural traditions (Cajete, 2006; Yazzie-Mintz, 2011).

The intention of this project has been to explore the conception and implementation of indigenous education in Rapa Nui. It focusses on how this may or may not be allowing a forum for indigenous children on the island to develop culturally responsive education: one that values their cultural identity and language, in a local and national context. Through this research, I am interested in following up on concerns discussed by theorists of decolonization, as a response to Western determination of what constitutes research, particularly in indigenous communities.

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<sup>4</sup> Program of Intercultural Bilingual Education (PEIB), Ministry of Education, Chile. Guidelines available at [www.mineduc.cl](http://www.mineduc.cl)

In this sense, this research arises from a critical awareness of the inequalities imposed by the colonial discourse (L. T. Smith, 1999). My interest is to move towards a decolonizing qualitative research approach that is capable of integrating “text and voice; the existential, sacred performance text; the return to narrative as a political act; and inquiry as a moral act, ethics, and critical moral consciousness” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 613).

### **Research questions**

This research aims to answer and discuss the following questions:

- To what extent is, and has it been possible to incorporate Rapa Nui indigenous knowledge in a school setting?
- What attitudes (perceptions, expectations and ideas) do school staff, teachers and parents hold as their responsibility in curriculum development and to what extent is their participation in this endeavour a collaborative work?
- How can research with indigenous teachers and parents promote self-determination, while positioning myself as a non-indigenous researcher?

### **Map of thesis**

The first research question was pursued through both a literature review and the perspectives of participants. The historical perspective was deemed fundamental to understand the diachronic evolution of spaces for Rapa Nui language and culture in formal schooling; that would finally sustain the reflections that arise in the findings. Chapter 2 gives a context for the research, while chapter 3 narrates the establishment of formal education in Rapa Nui from a historical perspective.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodological elements of this research.

The second research question guided the analysis of the participants' stories, which corresponds to chapter 5 and 6 and the conclusion of this thesis (chapter 7). The third question fundamentally motivated the search for dialogue with the participants', and the shared reflections on the research process which were related with all the stages of the present inquiry.

In the following section, I clarify the main concepts I deal with throughout the thesis. I begin with a critical perspective of the classical approach of cultural contact from the filter of 'acculturation', as developed by North American social scientists in the first half of the twentieth century. I briefly dialogue with their notions of culture, to explain my perspective of cultural change.

### **Understandings of Culture and Knowledge**

In 1928, Margaret Mead (1901-1978) published "Coming of Age in Samoa. A psychological study of primitive youth for Western civilization." This publication became a best-seller, and her work strongly influenced the proliferation of cross-cultural studies, particularly in education, under a paradigm that would be later called 'cultural relativism' (Brown, 2008). Mead and her colleagues approached non-Western cultures based on the assumption that "each culture constitutes a total social world that reproduces itself through enculturation; [in turn] the process by which values, emotional dispositions, and embodied behaviours are transmitted from one generation to the next" (Brown, 2008, p. 364). Thus when anthropologists like Mead visited cultural groups 'far from Western influence', they placed on these people an assumed primitive state of purity; which they could 'see' given their supposed emotional detachment from the situations they observed.



In a written report after five weeks of fieldwork in Samoa, Mead points out the presence of the United States government on the island of Samoa, and the ubiquity of the London Missionary Society. In regards to the village of Ta'u where she would conduct fieldwork: "foreign influences that distort the native culture are minimal" (in Robins, 2003, p.14)<sup>5</sup>. Underlying her statement is a voice of 'presumed neutrality', that gave ethnography a guarantee of objectivity and validity (L. T. Smith, 1999). Time would tell that the political and ethical issues arising from the contact between two or more different cultures would become hardly avoidable in the anthropological field. In 1936, Redfield, Linton & Herskovits defined acculturation as:

*"the phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups" (1936, p. 149-150)<sup>6</sup>.*

This conceptualization of contact between two cultures seems to move away from the popularly held assumption that acculturation is always a systematic loss of cultural traits. However, to speak of 'original cultural patterns' dangerously suggests an almost institutionalized misinterpretation of the particle 'a' of acculturation, which refers to a model in which cultures in contact lose what characterized them, and therefore - one might infer from this tangle of assumptions - lose their culture. Acculturation is commonly used to highlight the ill-effects of cultural contact and colonization; and it repeatedly fosters what Bishop and Glynn refer to in terms of 'cultural deprivation theories' (1999, p. 36).

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<sup>5</sup> Mead, Margaret (n/d), "The adolescent girl in Samoa", report to the National Research Council, Margaret Library of Congress, Collections of the Manuscript Division, container 12, Margaret Mead Papers; as quoted in Robins (2003, p. 14).

<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the authors immediately note "under this definition, acculturation is to be distinguished from *culture-change*, of which it is but one aspect, and assimilation which is at times a phase of acculturation" (Redfield et al., p. 149-150. Italics in original)

I place this story here because it connects to my training as an anthropologist, and reflects my process of engaging in a critical perspective of the essential bias that informs early understandings of culture; that in turn underpinned research bearing cultural superiority standpoints. The use of these in a wider paradigm of colonization has been well accounted for in the stories of Aotearoa and New Zealand (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; L. T. Smith, 1999). Though the concept of acculturation has been redefined in contemporary research and appropriated by other disciplines (particularly health and psychology<sup>7</sup>); the initial description of acculturation continues to lay the ground for further deficit theorization of cultural groups in contact. As Bishop and Glynn state regarding educational research performed with Māori culture and people, much “was inspired by the then currently fashionable (but dominant majority) approach in the United States that focused on ‘cultural deficiencies’” (1999, p. 38).

This critical stance is vital for my research, particularly because I am interested in a reality which could not be explained by the model of acculturation. Despite the violence of the colonization process and the intensity of current transits pointing towards a ‘globalization of culture’, its counterforce has led to the ‘culturalisation of the globe’. The continuity of indigenous struggles and demands throughout the world have proved that ‘culture counts’, and that identity survives despite change in social and historical conditions. History implies that how culture is ultimately defined will permeate understanding of cultural change.

For Mead and her contemporaries both psychological and anthropological theories were based on a behaviourist paradigm of the individual, and

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<sup>7</sup> For example, Berry develops the notion of ‘acculturation stress’; of which he argues: “there is a clear picture that the pursuit of integration is least stressful (at least where it is accommodated by the larger society), but marginalization is the most stressful; in between are the assimilation and separation strategies, sometimes one, sometimes the other being the less stressful. This pattern of findings holds for various indicators of mental health” (2005, p. 708). For a critical perspective see Chirkov (2009).

therefore in society, human affairs were understood as complex stimuli and connected reactions. In this line, her study of 'formal culture', would attempt to "disregard the subjective attitudes of individuals"(Mead, 1990 [1939]); ignoring the ethical and political issues involved (Di Leonardo, 1998).

However, between 1955 and 1960 the behaviourist paradigm would experience a shift toward what came to be known in social sciences as 'cognitivism' (D'Andrade, 1984, p. 88). Culture ceased to be seen as a set of habits and norms, and the attention focused increasingly towards knowledge, meaning and symbols. The perspective thus shifted from the outside of the individual, towards the inside. This is noticeable in the definition given by Goodenough (1964), to take a stand away from culture as "a material phenomenon; it is not things, people, behaviour or emotions. It is rather an organization of it all. It is the way of things that people have in their mind, their models for perceiving, relating them or interpreting them" (p. 36).

The idea of culture as knowledge was completed by Geertz who famously defined culture as "historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols... by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (1973, p. 89). A decade later, Roy D'Andrade writes culture as 'cultural systems', in turn "learned systems of meaning, communicated through language and other symbolic systems; having representative, directive and affective functions, and capable of creating cultural entities and particular senses of reality" (1984, p. 116).

I portray briefly this 'story of a concept' among North American scholars, attempting to clarify my own understanding of culture in theoretical terms. What comes to the forefront of this discussion goes beyond abstract depictions of what culture is, to illustrate the process through which these

Western scholars came to consider the existence of what D'Andrade called 'particular senses of reality'. Indigenous scholars have asserted this idea more precisely as particular ways of 'being', which refer us to the ontological and epistemological dimensions of being human (Pihama, 2010). Culture as a meaning relates to a specific worldview (i.e. indigenous), or paradigm (i.e. Western research). Hence, it could be said that language is culture.

This story expresses the increased distance that researchers within social sciences have taken regarding the pretension of universalism in their studies. This is relevant because it implies taking responsibility for the harm that research has done in the past. "Researchers seldom caution that their conclusions may be limited by the characteristics of the specific children they studied, or by the particular methods and measures employed. Instead, they offer unqualified and more grandiose conclusions about the potential of 'the child'" (Hwang, Lamb, & Sigel, 1996, p. 2). This process of awareness has not only occurred in North American anthropology academia; but most importantly, it has not occurred without struggle.

These struggles have been rooted in local realities. The dichotomy of tradition versus modernization has further entrapped indigenous peoples in the past, resulting in indigenous identities described as primitive, simple or traditional. Critical perspectives of culture and critical theory emphasise the need to research with an awareness of cultural dominance. One such critic was a South American thinker from the field of education: Paulo Freire. He stresses that all humans are historically and socially situated (Freire, 1972).

So, how can cultural change be understood without denying the 'historical subject?' Sahlins ([1985] 1997) attempted an explanation based on his research in Pacific Islands. He offers a dilemma similar to the chicken and the egg, or in his words: "meanings are reassessed as they are performed in practice" which "takes place in the creative activity of the historical subjects". He continues:

*“On the one hand, people organize their projects and give significance to their objects from the existing understandings of the cultural order. To that extent, the culture is historically reproduced in action ... On the other hand, then, as the contingent circumstances of the action need not to conform to the significance some group might assign them, people are known to creatively reconsider their conventional schemes. And to that extent, the culture is historically altered in action” (Sahlins, [1985] 1997, p. 9) .*

Thus, the ‘structural’ dimension and the ‘historical dimension’ coincide in imperfect concurrency through human agency; giving rise to small displacements or reinterpretations at the level of meaning. Culture can be described in this regard as ‘essentially dynamic’.

The understanding of change in cultures becomes an issue in the contemporary context: we stand in the Information Age (Castells, 1997), globalization and light-speed flows of capital and knowledge. Thereupon, I situate myself in the realms of cultural change and adaptation to widely influential global trends. Understanding that what has been called ‘globalization’ is not one, but a set of processes of homogenization and, in turn, an articulated fragmentation of the world, which transforms old differences and inequalities without destroying them: globalization does not only homogenize and make us closer; it multiplies differences and generates new inequalities (García-Canclini, 1999).

In this context, cultural groups are traversed by constant flows of information, in turn associated with different forms of political and economic power; which are central dimensions to understand how the new information is incorporated in each case. Peters & Besley (2006) assert that “knowledge is now the dominant feature of *social* transformation, associated with globalization as the worldwide integration of economic activity” (p. 26. Emphasis in the original).

Faced with the challenge proposed by the tensions between centrifugal and centripetal forces in the 'world of flows' in which we stand, localities react developing their own strategies. Similar to the notion of the 'creative activity' of historical subjects mentioned by Sahlins, Appadurai proposes 'imagination' as the means through which "individuals and groups seek to annex the global into their own practices of the modern" (1996, p. 4). Sahlins reminds us however that cultural contact and change –albeit now intensified- is not something new: "the dynamic elements into play, including the confrontation with an external world experiencing their own narrow intentions; are always present in human experience" (Sahlins, [1985] 1997, p. 10).

Here, we establish a distinction that can be useful in understanding the forms of cultural contact today, namely between 'cultural' settings and 'ethnic identities'. While identity can be based on the culture, it does not depend on a unique heritage; including cultural traditions can be invented, rebuilt or appropriated, without ceasing to constitute a basis for identity formulations (Bartolomé, 1997). The culture then, involves a civilizational dimension, which contrasts with the construction of identity in terms of a political demonstration of ethnicity. In a way, culture refers to the internal perspective of a human group and their organizational schemes, while identity relates primarily to a relational process: "The identity manifested as ethnicity has a capacity of contrastive definition to the extent that be given to different social actors... Culture... is the doing of those identities" (Bartolomé, 1997, p. 76)

In this research, I address the 'doing' of a group of people who, not coincidentally, are collectively identified as Rapa Nui, which implies the existence of permanent crossings between the two dimensions. Different but related, culture gives the basis for ethnic identity, and this can occur in varying ways. How cultural forms impact on the identification process, according to Bartolomé, gives them their distinctive character. And what

experience indicates is that culture takes on different values as social and historical contexts vary; which implies – and this is the point – that culture cannot be lost. Though cultural groups can be ‘de-characterized’ through systematic oppression; it is maybe still providing viable identification for its members (Bartolomé, 1997, pp. 75-77).

In all these processes, it is necessary to consider a key aspect of the survival of culture and identity. That is, the ways of perpetuating the culture in time, which is subject to the feasibility of certain transmission strategies through which people pass on to the next generation, their shared systems of meaning.

Anthropologists have called this process ‘enculturation’. The point here is the distinction between learning propositions from a culture, and the internalization of such propositions as personal beliefs. Enculturation in this sense, gives propositions to people not only as real, but also correct (Spiro, 1984, p. 36). Enculturation then, is a process that begins at birth of a child within a human culture, and relates to the configuration of an identity, individual and collective.

Among the complex psychosocial mechanisms that contribute to develop a shared identity, affection is highlighted; affection that the presence of others awakens, others with whom you can identify due to considering them similar to ourselves (Bartolomé, 1997, p. 47). Collective identity then, through affectivity, binds human beings on a moral commitment of loyalty to a community, collectively represented in a symbolic and ethical universe capable of inducing certain specific practices. Thus, it is no coincidence that primary socialization –as explained by Berger & Luckmann (1976)- is characterized by a high affective and emotional component, which gives the initiatory learning a solid firmness in the personal structure of the individual (p. 128).

Discussing the notion of culture, and cultural change, is appropriate in this context given that throughout this thesis, I look toward an understanding of the spaces that Rapa Nui culture and knowledge has been 'allowed' in formal education; and particularly in the making of curriculum. Therefore, more than a material product I could depict as existent/non-existent in the realm of education; I believe that cultural knowledge gives significance to the social representations that underlie human action. The social representations embedded in cultural knowledge are understood as symbolic constructions, created and recreated in the course of interactions (Moscovici, 1979). Therefore, they reflect the collective experience and add to the biography of each individual, the knowledge generated by society, as an experiential product of the long spatial and temporal association of a human group (Durkheim, 1968 in Bartolomé, 1997, p. 43). Fundamentally, I understand culture and knowledge as inseparable from human action; as long as they give significance to what we do. The experience of participants will help us understand culture not as a 'thing' that can be measured in terms of presence or absence in the school curriculum. Rather, culture will be seen through human agency. In this particular study, agency will be discussed in terms of how it has been able to foster a space for Rapa Nui knowledge in school.

With these notions at hand, I now turn towards the 'story' of Rapa Nui. I have focussed on constructing a story that allows the indigenous voice to be heard, attempting to move away from classical interpretations made of the historical developments on the island that tend to portray a passive and submissive community subjugated under colonial constraints. The historical perspective depicted here is a product of my 'putting together' of the historical landscape. To do this, I rely on the work of many others, however it can only be understood in terms of my personal interpretation of the events, or in terms of Sahlins, my own 'narrow intentions' (Sahlins, [1985] 1997, p. 10).



To answer my research questions, I have deemed history to be an essential component of this thesis. Pursuing my own 'passionate approach', I believe the search for truth must consider historical positionings of people and cultures. It also aims to address the problem of invisibility in obtaining 'corporate views' of this history. In this case, I collect the views available through literature, as I get closer (in the thesis) to the perspective of the participants of this research.

## Chapter 2. Stories of Rapa Nui

*“In fact, the race is being swiftly and surely starved off the face of the earth: there is no hope for them in the future, which is dreary and desolate as the island itself. It is a sad thing to contemplate, this inevitable perishing of a patient harmless people, a people with no enemies, but lacking likewise friends able and willing to rescue them from their deplorable fate. Only one thing can save them –emigration from the cruel land they call their own”.*

“Rapa Nui: A Doomed People” (Chambers, 1869)

If there was a time when there was an agreement that indigenous people would remain solely in the memory - and perhaps in the frenetic descriptions of ethnographers, adventurers and other collectors<sup>8</sup>- it is now fairly evident that this was a serious mistake. Fortunately, the foretelling of old visitors did not give account of what is happening today in the same land that Rapa Nui people continue to call their own, but it gives strong hints of the narratives that have been historically developed about this volcanic island and its peoples.

Rapa Nui, also known throughout the Pacific as Te Pito o te Henua, marks the eastern vertex of what has been called by European ethnographers the Polynesian Triangle; the oceanic ‘Sea of Islands’ in words of Hau’ofa (2008, p. 27).

Today it is widely accepted that Rapa Nui was first populated by settlers of Polynesian origin (Fischer, 2005; Metraux, 1936). A complex and productive culture developed in conditions of extreme isolation under which natural resources, particularly timber, drastically decreased and a period of internal

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<sup>8</sup> Following Clifford’s reflection on ‘collecting art and culture’; “in the West... collecting has long been a strategy for the deployment of a possessive self, culture, authenticity” (1988, p. 96).

war led the islanders to seek forms of cultural re-invention (Englert, [1974] 2004).

The first contacts with the West occurred in the eighteenth century, amid the discovery expeditions of imperial powers. On the arrival of the Dutch Captain Jacob Roggeveen on Easter Sunday in 1722, he euro-centrally named the place Paasch Eyland, which was later translated into other European languages (Easter Island, Ile de Pâques, Isla de Pascua<sup>9</sup> Osterinsel). Rapa Nui is the name given by the indigenous population to the island, probably in the second half of the XIX century.

According to Fischer (1993), “Te Pito o te Henua” could be the Rapa Nui translation of ‘Rapa Nui’; originally in Rapan language, meaning the ‘Greater Extremity’, or ‘Land’s End’. Regarding historical annotation, he adds: “Although Father Honoré Laval de Mangareva had penned in 1856 l’île de Pâques (1969: 304) and ca. 1859 several times Vaihu (1938: 362ff), in his memoirs for 1863 he mentions ‘Rapa-nui ou l’île de Pâque[s]’, the earliest known citation of this name” (p. 64).

In 1862–1863, dozens of ships coming from the port of Callao in Peru invaded the island to obtain slaves (Conte Oliveros, 1994), which triggered a demographic catastrophe. Approximations regarding the amount of kidnapped islanders range between one and two thousand people transported to Peru during the 1860’s (Mccall, 1996). The identification of Rapa Nui people ‘as a whole’ has been associated with these labour raids and “the first massive contact with other Pacific peoples, necessitating for the first time self-identification within the Polynesian community” (Fischer, 1993, p. 64; also in Mccall, 1981, p. 57).

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<sup>9</sup> Spanish for ‘Easter Island’, it is the preferential name given to the island in the ‘Chilean discourse’ of Rapa Nui (see Young, 2011). Hence the word ‘Pascuense’ (in Spanish) to refer to the Rapa Nui people. Although I use the term Rapa Nui; in the translation of quotes I preserve denominations given to people and land (i.e. Rapanui, Pascuenses, Isla de Pascua or Pascua) in the original texts.

Over the next decade, successive epidemics decimated the population that had started to live in Hāŋa Roa around the French Mission of the Sacred Hearts. The Catholic mission had begun in 1864, with the arrival of Eugene Eyraud, a French priest of the Order of the Sacred Hearts of Picpus. He would be later joined by Hippolyte Roussel, Gaspar Zumbohn and Theodore Escolan (Castro Flores, 1996). In addition to teaching the ‘word of God’, the missionaries introduced Rapa Nui people to carpentry, the cultivation of new species; and created a sort of ‘home’ for orphaned children, who according to their letters, were:

*“... very numerous here.... Father Roussel has already gathered several [children], so when the houses are ready, 45 boys will soon enter the ‘pupuraga’<sup>10</sup> (name of the establishment) and 39 girls in another [house]. Father Roussel will take care of them and I took the young [boys]. How happy we were and the children too! Unfortunately our joy was short-lived because the disease of the country” was not slow to enter our “pupuraga” and there are no more left than 3 or 4 girls. But others have come later and at this time there must be thirty”*  
(Zumbohn, 1868 in Foerster et al., 2013, p. 78).

Besides introducing Rapa Nui people to the ‘white religion’, the first missionaries played a strong ‘civilizing’ role (Porteous, 1981), with the historical bias that is thus implied; introducing them to Europeanised lifestyles. Through evangelising, the missionaries banned pre-contact paganism (in their words) including, but not limited to the famous *rono rono* scripts, ‘nudity, tattooing, most sexual practices, ritual performances,

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<sup>10</sup> The annotation *pupuraga* corresponds with the Rapa Nui word ‘*pukurāŋa*’, which was translated and defined by Englert as “retinue, followers, disciples, students.” However, he also defines *rāŋa* separately as “fugitive” or “those left homeless” (Englert, [1974] 2004, p. 348); which could have some relation to the interpretation offered by the missionaries; *pukurāŋa* being in their letters “the home of orphans” (Zumbohn 1868 in Foerster et al. 2013).

<sup>11</sup> Previously in the text, Zumbohn describes this disease as a “kind of contagious tuberculosis” (Zumbohn 1868 in Foerster, Montecino, & Moreno Pakarati, 2013, p. 78).

traditional chanting, singing and dancing' (Fischer, 2005, p. 99). According to the accounts of the missionaries to their superiors in Tahiti and Paris, Rapa Nui people generally<sup>12</sup> embraced religion. By 1868, two months after Eyraud's death on the island, Zumbohn declares that "all our indians have been regenerated by holy baptism" (in Foerster et al., 2013, p. 74).

That same year, the arrival of the French trader and exploiter Jean Dutrou-Bornier led to conflicts with the missionaries (particularly Hippolyte Roussel), in his attempt to take control over the island. According to Moreno Pakarati (2011), Dutrou-Bornier's problem "was not so much the stubborn Roussel, as the natives themselves" (p. 57). The Frenchman was interested in controlling the island (and the people) to establish a sheep ranch and collect profit. In opposition to the missionaries, he accepted paganism and surrounded himself with several local chiefs, to whom he gave firearms for collaboration with his causes. Moreno further suggests that Rapa Nui involvement in the quarrels between missionaries and Pito-pito (as Dutrou-Bornier is called in Rapa Nui<sup>13</sup>) can only be understood in terms of native political power holders that engaged with one of these two sides. More precisely; the Rapa Nui tried to seize opportunities and use foreigners for their own purposes. The conflict itself was a revival of old hatreds between tribal confederations (Moreno Pakarati, 2010).

The conflict continued until 1871, the year in which the Catholic mission left the island in company of the majority of the Rapa Nui population, towards French Polynesia. Many of these Rapa Nui who left would later return to their land; "Pakomio, Maori, Urekino and his wife Aŋata Veri Tahī, Napoleon Tepihe a Vehi, Nicolas Pakarati Ure Potahi; they all played soon as teachers and catechists. Thanks to the initiative of this group of well-intentioned people, faith did not extinguish when the island was left

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<sup>12</sup> The opposition of Roma is worth considering (Castro Flores, 1996; Moreno Pakarati, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> The use of nicknames in Rapa Nui is noticeable until today, however scarcely analysed through a local perspective.

without priests<sup>14</sup> (Englert, 1964, p. 90). Although priests and other religious figures would sporadically visit the island, none of these stayed permanently until 1935.

By 1877 the Rapa Nui population reached a record low of just 111 inhabitants (McCall, 1976).

## Colonialism and Nation

*“Abandonment is his salvation; his exclusion offers him another form of communion” (Foucault, 1965, p. 5).*

Rapa Nui represents the westernmost territory under Chilean sovereignty. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of September 1888, a young and expansive Republic of Chile annexed the island through an ‘Agreement of Wills’ (Acuerdo de Voluntades) between ‘ariki Atamu Tekena and his council of chiefs, and the captain of the navy and representative of the Chilean State, Policarpo Toro Hurtado. Different interpretations of the Agreement can be found in the official report of the ‘Commission of Truth and New Deal’ for the Indigenous peoples of Chile<sup>15</sup> (CVHNT, 2003), and in the alternative report prepared for the same occasion by Mario Tuki and others<sup>16</sup>. Interpretations

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<sup>14</sup> After the abandonment of the French mission, and although priests and other religionists would sporadically visit the island, none of these settled permanently until 1935, year in which the author of the quoted lines above arrives. He was a German priest, who worked in the island until his death in 1969. This quote must be understood in terms of the story he constructs of the ‘first century of Christianity in Easter Island’, from 1864 until 1964. Born Franz Anton Englert (1888-1969), he received the name Sebastian through his ordering in the Friars Minor Capuchin, an outgrowth of the Franciscans.

<sup>15</sup> “Comisión de Verdad Histórica y Nuevo Trato para los Pueblos Indígenas de Chile” (hereafter CVHNT). This commission investigated ‘historic truths’ about indigenous peoples in Chile between 2000 and 2003. Handed to the President of Chile on October 28th 2003. The comisión was established by presidential ‘Decreto Supremo N° 19 of 2001.

<sup>16</sup> Both of them available in [http://www.memoriachilena.cl/602/articles-122901\\_recurso\\_6.pdf](http://www.memoriachilena.cl/602/articles-122901_recurso_6.pdf)

of the known<sup>17</sup> texts show considerable differences. In the translation by Hito and others (in CVHNT, 2003) of the Rapa Nui/Tahitian version of the agreement, Chile is referred to as a 'friend of the place' ('mau te hoa kona'). This coincides with testimonies written almost thirty years later by the religious Bienvenido De Estella (1920). He recreates a dialogue he had been told of, between the brother of the Chilean captain Pedro Pablo Toro (the first colonizer family to be appointed by Chile on the island) and the Pascuense king ('rey pascuense' sic). The latter, Atamu Tekena, had demanded that Chile hoist its flag below the Rapa Nui flag, and said; "we know that the Bishop put the island under the protectorate of Chile, but nothing has been sold. Mister Toro kept prudently silent at the indication of the kanaka King<sup>18</sup>" (DeEstella, 1920, pp. 140-142). The Spanish text on the other hand, states that the sovereignty of the island is transferred to the Chilean Republic, reserving at the same time the chiefly titles of which they were invested (Mccall, 1997, p. 114).

Rapa Nui usually narrate that when the people were gathered to make the 'agreement', the 'ariki Atamu Tekena' collected some soil for himself and passed on a piece of grass to the Chilean captain. This stated that the grass that grew there would be interpretable in terms of Chilean sovereignty, and the land would remain the property of the Rapa Nui (hence the expression

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<sup>17</sup> In the same document the authors state that for the Agreement two documents were written; "a document of assignment -Vaai Honga Kaina- and Vananga Haake – proclamation- written in both Castilian Spanish and a mix between Rapa Nui and ancient Tahitian. The Spanish text was transcribed by Vergara in 1939 and made public. In 1974, the originals of this document, including versions in the local language were given to Grant McCall by the elders Juan Riroroko Mahute and his wife Luisa Tuki Kaituhoe; for safe-keeping until times were conducive" (CVHNT 2003, p. 277). When the Australian anthropologist Grant McCall visited Rapa Nui, Chile had recently undergone a military coup that brought Dictator Pinochet into power, where he remained until 1990 through a policy of systematic human rights violations.

<sup>18</sup> The Bishop referred in the note most probably refers to Tepano Jaussen, Bishop of Axieri (Tahiti). Kanaka was popularized as a Word for the indigenous people of the island. It is unclear where this usage comes from. Though it evokes the Hawaiian kanaka (man, person. In Rapa Nui, tangata) popularized by Cook; it is also found in texts as 'canaca'; which was the name given to chinese slaves in the Americas (Foerster et al., 2013, p. xx).

of "pasto" or "mauku" - literally grass in Spanish and Rapa Nui language respectively - used by the islanders to refer to Chileans until today).

This agreement was the basis of the commitment that the State of Chile would assume with the island and its inhabitants. The islanders allege the breach of the agreement, as the cause of many conflicts of the recent past and, in particular, "of the negative attitude of the community towards the state and Chileans in general" (CVHNT, 2003, p.278). Though this is not the place to discuss the legality of the Treaty, it is important to point out that most of the claims sustained by Rapa Nui political organizations for righteous self-determination and autonomy are rooted in the questioned *Acuerdo de Voluntades* (Gomez, 2011). The breaching of the Agreement by the state was substantiated in the upcoming years<sup>19</sup>.

A few months before the 'agreement', Policarpo Toro's brother Pedro Pablo, along with three other families, had settled in Rapa Nui as 'agents of colonization'. This first attempt of establishing a Chilean colony failed<sup>20</sup>, and in 1892 Pedro Pablo abandoned the island with the surviving colonizers.

After the annexation, the Chilean state inaugurated a policy of upholding private intermediaries that were given total control of the island, endorsing the continuity of the sheep exploitation between 1895 and 1953. In words of Moreno Pakarati (2012): "The foreign private interest in Rapa Nui began as a commercial venture created by Jean Baptiste Dutrou Bornier in the 1870s. Passing through various forms, it ended up as an operating company known

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<sup>19</sup> The inscription of the entirety of the island as 'fiscal property' (propiedad fiscal) in 1933 is until this day one of the most contested actions undertaken by the Chilean Government (see CVHNT, 2003). That inscription, with the exception of approximately 15% of the land held in private title by Rapa Nui people remains current.

<sup>20</sup> Pedro Pablo Toro wrote of this time: "We spent a few weeks in exasperating situation. Many came to fear that the Government of Chile had definitely abandoned the island. The same kanakas, observing that in more than two and a half years no national ship had appeared, they also started to believe they would no longer send any other, and they started claiming their rights over the island and to take an arrogant and threatening manner not previously expressed "(1892, p. 194).



as the CEDIP” (p. 29). In 1903, the Scottish owned ‘Williamson Balfour & Co.’ created a subsidiary company (Fischer, 2005, p. 157), shamelessly constituted as the ‘Compañía Explotadora de Isla de Pascua’ (literally ‘Exploitation Company of Easter Island’; hereafter CEDIP, in Spanish; or simply the ‘Company’). They obtained a lease for the operation of the sheep industry, which was managed on the island by administrators appointed in foreign places<sup>21</sup>. The lease would last until 1953.

As the sheep multiplied, the spaces that the Rapa Nui people were allowed to occupy became progressively reduced; and the ongoing abuse of the administrators would be continuously resisted by the Rapa Nui<sup>22</sup>. In The last years of the XIX century, the Rapa Nui people were forced out of their ancestral lands with firearms and reduced to a space of 100,000 square meters surrounding the bay of Hana Roa. There, the Rapa Nui people managed to establish themselves as a sovereign community in Hana Roa, and develop resistance against the CEDIP, persuading the Chilean government to guarantee them –at least- part of their land in Hana Roa: 1,000 hectares in 1902 and 2,000 hectares in 1917 (Foerster, Ramírez, & Zurob, 2010)<sup>23</sup>. This place constitutes up until today the core of the single urban area of the island.

After 1953, Rapa Nui was governed by the Chilean Navy: “If in the past the Navy had always been a weak presence, dependent on the Company for food and supply (and most human company), by this time Easter Island was

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<sup>21</sup> Although the CEDIP was created in Valparaíso (Chile), all the Company’s associates were Chilean-based Scots from eastern or southern Scotland (Fischer, 2005, p. 158).

<sup>22</sup> There is a wide range of literature regarding Rapa Nui colonial history. Of broad scope and immense details is S.R Fischer’s account of ‘the turbulent history of Easter Island’ (2005), in English. The recent publication of Chileans Cristino and Fuentes (Eds.) treats several issues related with the settlement of the exploitation Company and the Rapa Nui response (2011). For bibliographic details, see references.

<sup>23</sup> This was assured by a ‘Temperamento Provisorio’ (May 5<sup>th</sup> 1917); a provisional code that attempted to regulate the activity on the island. See also Moreno Pakarati (2012).

being run as if it were the *Baquedano*<sup>24</sup> itself... the Navy also assumed the role that the Company had played as importer of all Western civilization” (Fischer, 2005, p. 201). During this period the Chilean colonization process strengthened, with the support of one of its main apparatus: formal education, which started to be part of the daily lives of the Rapa Nui people in the first half of the twentieth century.

Gradually, the outside world began to open for the Rapa Nui. Due to the restrictions imposed on them for leaving the island, a few undertook clandestine trips, and others embarked covertly on the Navy’s ships. Between the 50’s and 60s’, some Rapa Nui were sent to be ‘educated’ on the mainland. All in all, the growing perception of the ‘outside world’ would raise the Rapa Nui’s awareness of the deprivation of rights to which they had been subjected. This eventually led a group of Rapa Nui, led by Professor Alfonso Rapu, to manifest against local authorities. They wrote a letter<sup>25</sup> to the newly elected president Eduardo Frei Montalva (1964–1970), demanding respect for their civil rights. On the island, Alfonso Rapu was arrested, interrogated and formally charged for sedition, and would be transferred to the mainland for a military trial. However, a resistance was launched by a group of Rapa Nui women who defended the young social leader (22 years old at the time) against the onslaught of the naval authority. The organized action of the movement that supported him, and the presence at the time of a Canadian expedition (METEI) as an outside observer; obliged the Navy to drop the charges against the leaders of the uprising and call for official elections. On January 12<sup>th</sup> 1965; Alfonso Rapu was elected by the Rapa Nui community as “Hapa Roa’s new *alcalde* [mayor] in fresh democratic elections both approved and confirmed by the Republic” (Fischer, 2005, p. 214.). The ‘bloodless revolution’, as Fischer

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<sup>24</sup> The author refers to one of the Navy’s vessels, the training ship ‘General Baquedano’; with which he points out to the fact that the island was managed under naval (military) rules.

<sup>25</sup> The letter was published in the Santiago newspaper ‘Las Noticias de Última Hora’ (‘last hour news’), on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1965.

named it (2005, p. 209), would accelerate the enactment of the so-called 'Ley Pascua' in 1966 (Law Nº 16.441), which created the 'Department of Isla de Pascua', as part of the Province of Valparaíso (V Region); formalizing the integration of the Rapa Nui into a national platform. As a result, seventy six years after the 'Acuerdo de Voluntades', the islanders would be considered as 'Chilean citizens'.

Henceforth, living conditions on the island begin to change rapidly, and the Rapa Nui would be brought into a national modernization process that rarely considered their particular 'ways of being'. In this attempt, a number of facilities would be offered to subsidize the assimilation process to the 'national culture', defined primarily as citizenship. The ultimate goal of the Chilean effort would be undifferentiated integration of Rapa Nui people -as well as other indigenous groups- in a national legal framework. The assimilationist agenda of the Chilean government would timidly begin to change in 1993, with the enactment of Law Nº 19.253 (referred to as the 'Indigenous Law'). This law would transform the negotiation pathways established between the government and the indigenous peoples recognized by the law (nine in total). In the case of Rapa Nui, it could be broadly stated that the local community continued to develop empowerment strategies that allowed them to negotiate with the state authority, through the establishment of locally legitimate political figures and the association with specific people from the continent. Thus, although in recent years there has been progress in the government's willingness to negotiate decisions involving Easter Island, this is largely due to the strategic action -and continued resistance- of the Rapa Nui, which under specific social and historical conditions have gradually been able to increase their negotiating power.

With these general notions of Rapa Nui history at hand, I will continue giving a context for my research through a brief 'picture' of the times in which Chilean formal education slowly begins to appear on the island,

namely, the first half of the XX century. Thus, I will go back to the year 1914, attempting a reinterpretation of the colonial history of 'Easter Island', a task I believe is central to understand the scenario that indigenous education is currently facing.

### **Reconstructing a story to tell a century after the rising of María Añata**

*"Santiago, June 3, 1914: the Fiscal Treasury of Santiago anticipates to Mister José Ignacio Vives Solar, appointed by decree of this date for preceptor of the rural school created in Easter Island, the salary and gratification for the last seven months of this year" (Ministry of Education, Vol. 3199 in Foerster, 2012b, p. 2).*

*"School was duly begun, but after a few days the children ceased to appear, the master declared he was 'not an attendance officer' and from then till we left, nearly a year later, no school was held; the last we saw of the blackboard and counting-frame, they were rotting in a field some two miles off, where they had been taken by the French marooned sailors for use in some carnival pony-races" (Routledge, [1919] 1998, p. 151).*

In fact, at the time there was no such school physically 'created' as the Ministry's record states; but in the accounts of a Chilean priest that visited the island earlier, "behind the church and forming one body there is a room that once was a school and might well serve for that use if there was teacher who taught" (Valenzuela, 1912). The church was built by Rapa Nui people, along with the French missionaries in Hana Roa. Cristino, González, Vargas, Edwards, and Recasens (1984) affirm that prior to this date, the only records related to a systematic instruction performed by persons from outside the indigenous community refer to the catechism carried out by Catholic missionaries (p. 57); and a short lived attempt roughly between (1896-1901) of the first Chilean manager for CEDIP and representative of the state as

‘Sub-delegado Marítimo’<sup>26</sup> (naval sub-delegate), Alberto Sánchez Manterola whose wife gave sewing lessons (Arredondo, 2012, p. 60).

Following on from the story that the epigraphs above begin to tell; the appointed preceptor arrives to Rapa Nui on August 5<sup>th</sup> of 1914, aboard of the Chilean training ship ‘General Baquedano’. Vives Solar would arrive in the midst of the so-called ‘rebellion of Añata’, regarded as “one of the most important indigenous uprisings in the history of Rapa Nui occurred in reaction to the oppressive living conditions and colonial domination of the island imposed by the Company in charge of its exploitation” (Fuentes & Moreno Pakarati, 2013, p. 5).

It must have been perhaps a surprise for ‘Professor Vives’ that the circumstances accelerated his interim appointment as ‘Sub-delegado Marítimo’ (naval sub-delegate) until 1917. He would go down in history as the first representative of Chile on the island that was not simultaneously the manager of the exploitation company (Fuentes & Moreno Pakarati, 2013), inaugurating a (provisional) third attempt<sup>27</sup> of the Chilean government to impose state authority and carry on their ‘civilizing mission’

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<sup>26</sup> Both before and after the annexation, relationships between Chile and Rapa Nui were almost exclusively mediated by the Chilean Navy (‘Armada de Chile’), through more or less regular visits in the naval ships see Ramírez, 1939, p. 177). The ‘Subdelegado marítimo’ title was therefore conceived according to the Navy’s hierarchies. However the position of such in Rapa Nui as a colonization officer was unique in the country; whose specific attributions would be furthered later (see Cristino & Fuentes, 2011).

<sup>27</sup> Note that all previous efforts had failed, both the colonial mission of Pedro Pablo Toro (1888-1892) and Alberto Sanchez Manterola (1896-1901).

(Simon & Smith, 2001). His educational role, however, was left in the background<sup>28</sup>.

In the times previous to his arrival, Maria Añata Veri Tahi, a woman with considerable influence among the Rapa Nui people (see Moreno Pakarati, 2011, p. 67); used religious language to engage in dialogue with the colonial authorities<sup>29</sup>. Maria Añata lead a growing number of her people to claim respect for their rights to land, to animals, and denounced mistreatment from who was the manager of the CEDIP at the time, Henry Percy Edmunds. This English man was also -until then- appointed as naval sub-delegate by the Chilean state.

A month and a half before the arrival of the Chilean ship, a British woman had arrived to Rapa Nui to perform ethnographic research on the pre-Christian culture of the islanders. Katherine Scoresby Routledge would leave an interesting account of this rebellion, and would have been instigated by Maria Añata -whom Routledge accounted for as a prophetess- to take a mediating role in the conflict. In her story, she recalls; “while we were still at the Manager’s [house], a curious development began which turned the history of the next five weeks into a Gilbertian opera; a play, however, with an undercurrent of reality which made the time the most anxious in the story of the Expedition. On that date [June 30<sup>th</sup>] a semi-crippled old woman, named Anata (sic), came up to the Manager’s house

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<sup>28</sup> A mainland newspaper would record the numerous responsibilities given to Vives Solar: “It will be compulsory for illiterates and children to attend the school that the Supreme Government establishes on Easter [Island], of which Mr. Vives Solar is preceptor, and every parent will send their children/To this proclamation we must add that Mr. Vives has been appointed by Presidential Decree as civil sub-delegate, Official of the Civil Registry, preceptor of the school and responsible of the weather annotations” (From: El Mercurio de Valparaíso, September 18th 1914 in Foerster 2012b, p.3).

<sup>29</sup> Note that the use of plural refers to the authority of the Exploitation company and that of the Chilean state. To these is that María Añata speaks. For an analysis of this historical moment loaded with symbolism, refer to the work of the historian Nelson Castro Flores. The author refers to the uprising led by Maria Añata as one of ‘millennialist’ type (Castro Flores 1996).

accompanied by two men, and informed him that she had had a dream from God, according to which M. Merlet<sup>30</sup>, the chairman of the Company, was 'no more', and the island belonged to the Kanakas, who were to take the cattle and have a feast the following day" ([1919] 1998, p. 141-142). Later on, in a conference presentation about her expedition to the Royal Geographical Society of London, she furthered: "Consequently, they defied the authorities for five weeks and carried out raids against the sheep and cattle, eating their fill and destroying much more than they could logically consume" (Routledge 1916, in Foerster, 2012a, p. 71).

The newcoming preceptor also left a series of chronicles of his experience, complementing his testimony of the events with the information given to him by the Rapa Nui. The vision that Vives Solar (Vives-Solar, 1917b) held of María Anata was that: "her imagination had concluded by exalting with the amalgam of religious principles... the adventurous spirit of her race and pagan superstitions swallowed in her mother's lap. Thus it is not surprising that at senile age, when reason falters, [she] concludes in believing herself as an extraordinary body called by God to fill in the history of the island and her people, a role similar to the heroines of the Old Testament" (p. 656). About her 'superstitions', he later adds: "Among the most deeply rooted superstitions among the islanders, a superstition that is common to almost all Polynesian islands, is the belief in the realization of dreams" (p. 657).

The author goes on to explain the actions undertaken by the rebels, and affirms that they were planning a 'final blow' against the foreign authorities, to ensure the safe establishment of 'the kingdom of God' (or '*tutia*' in Rapa Nui); when a Chilean vessel appeared in the horizon. It had been two years since the last visit (Vives-Solar 1917b, p. 659-663).

About the day of his landing, Vives writes: "The 'Baquedano' [vessel] had a setback at the entrance of Anga Roa (sic) because a piece of the rudder

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<sup>30</sup> Merlet served as local Company manager in Valparaíso (Fischer, 2005, p. 157)

broke, forcing [the ship] to stop for about three hours for its composure. And Anata (sic) told her people that God was with them because he prevented the ship to move forward and allowed time for her orders to be fulfilled. Finally, at about four in the afternoon, the ship dropped anchors and immediately Daniera<sup>31</sup> and his high staff came aboard. After depositing with all respect the holy ark on deck, he took out a thick roll of paper and began reading his manifesto. This began: 'There is no power on earth besides God's, and He alone rules in Easter Island'; then followed a long explanation of the prophetic dreams that they had had and recounted the recently occurred events" (1917b, p. 663).

The written words of Taniera's speech show a clear awareness about what was at stake at the time: the power over the island. In accordance with Fuentes, Moreno & Montecinos "this rebellion had the effect of beginning a series of significant changes in the political structure of the colonial presence on the island" (2011, p. 148). The changes would deepen in the coming years, particularly after the accusation voiced by the Chilean Bishop Rafael Edwards against the abuse of 'men without God or law' (Edwards, 1916, p. 5); which had extensive commentary in the Chilean press of the time, and a strong influence in the expansion of the country's authority on the island (Foerster, 2011).

According to Vives (1917), "**Truly no one in the ship understood a word** and believed that it was a way of welcome, but having arrived Mr. Edmunds with Tepano, Manara and others, they explained to the commander Mr. Almanzor Hernández the **truth** of what happened. On the ship also travelled Mr. Merlet and, considering the magnitude of the events, he demanded prison for the leaders, and Daniera with five of his generals were put behind bars" (p. 663. Emphasis added).

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<sup>31</sup> He refers to Daniel María Teave a Haukena (otherwise known as Taniera 'Korohua'); who was Maria Anata's son-in-law and one of the main characters of the uprising.



This distance between the characters here mentioned, or the difficulties of ‘understanding’ between parties, as well as questioning on the power of ‘one’ to define the ‘truth of what happened’ over ‘the others’; has been present throughout the history of intercultural relations between Rapa Nui and Chile. In the analysis of Foerster, Montecino and Moreno, what emerges from the historical documents<sup>32</sup> is that “the perception of the community and its components are built on negativity and devaluation. The use of the word ‘canaca’, used at the time to refer to the Chinese slaves, to name the Rapa Nui people, shows the desire to erase their identity and the subordinated concept of its members. The devalued view of the community, (...) impedes understanding it as a nomos, as an agent” (2013, p. xx).

Finally, Vives closes this article by saying that the “young officials of the training ship Baquedano did not give importance to the events (...). However, as Daniera Corohua had against him physical evidence of his insurrection, which was the letter to Mr. Edmunds, the Commander could not refuse to take him prisoner to the mainland, but islanders were led to believe that he would only travel to present their grievances to the President of Chile. And so ended the reign of God, which the Pascuense do not lose hope to see repeated” (1917, p. 664).

Eighty years later, Alberto Hotus writes “Daniel Maria Teave died in Chile mysteriously, just as happened with Simeon Riroroko<sup>33</sup>. Never was it known

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<sup>32</sup> Their analysis is based on a much larger corpus of documents than those here commented, including missionaries letters, the navy’s archive and literature produced between 1864 and 1888, the year of the “Acuerdo de Voluntades.”

<sup>33</sup> Simeon Riroroko is regarded as the last ‘ariki (king) of Rapa Nui. In 1897-8 this man travels with three of his “ministers” to the Chilean mainland, with the purpose of visiting the President of the Republic, to inform him about the disgraceful situation of his countrymen. Although this trip is regarded in some accounts as voluntary, a case has been made by Foerster stating that it was a “deportation to the mainland of those considered as ‘disturbers of the public order’, and whose visible leaders at the time were the king and his closest allies” (Foerster, 2010b, p. 36), a policy that would have been repeated in other occasions. The ‘ariki died in the mainland “due to an excess of alcohol, almost certainly induced” by the Company’s men (Moreno Pakarati, 2011, p. 64).

officially on the island what was the cause of either deaths or where their bodies were buried. One might ask, what happened with the **promise** of protection and progress made by the Chilean authorities through Captain Policarpo Toro on September 9, 1888? Where were the authorities while the islanders were being enslaved?" (1987, p. 9. Emphasis in the original).

The story does not have a happy ending, and its moral is demoralizing for the Rapa Nui; so it hardly qualifies as a bedtime story... Many writings that tell his-story, the same that describe fabulous 'legends', stories of ancient heroes and customs now in disuse, are mostly generated by white men<sup>34</sup> who not only witness the 'events on the island', they also permeate into their texts their individual interests; their will of truth, in the sense of Foucault (1970). In this sense, the consideration of contemporary sources to understand the structures of colonial power, and thus the histories of Rapa Nui, implies recognizing - in terms of Sahlins - the 'narrow intentions' of the authors ([1985] 1997, p.10). This is the case of Vives, but also of many other missionaries, explorers, archaeologists, anthropologists and historians who obtain their information from Rapa Nui people who are usually not recognized as authors of the text; and who largely inform the accounts of 'Easter Island' today.

This is not the place to go further in the colonial history of Rapa Nui; however, one hundred years after, I have taken advantage of this coincidence to celebrate Maria Añata's vision, and emphasize the need to 'rebuild' the story of the Rapa Nui people, from a critical - yet committed - perspective. Recently, a renewed interest has fuelled the recovery and

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<sup>34</sup> The case of Katherine Routledge is however an exception: "Born to a wealthy and prestigious English Quaker family in 1866, Katherine rebelled against Victorian values, becoming one of the first female graduates of Oxford University and the first woman archaeologist to work in Polynesia" (Van Tilburg, 2003).

reinterpretation of sources<sup>35</sup>, favouring a ‘dialogic construction of history’ (Foerster, 2012d) and shedding light on the foregoing ‘analytical invisibility’ (Montecino, 1997) of Rapa Nui voices.

I will finish this section recalling that each society uses different strategies to understand the world, which is expressed in particular ways of communication; and by the transmission of shared meanings throughout time, it builds as a nation. It is through language that we also generate our stories; and the historical construction of a nation involves simultaneously voice and silence, memory and oblivion.

In the next chapter, I focus on giving a context from where to answer my research questions.

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<sup>35</sup> I particularly refer to the work of Rolf Foerster and others in the recovery of the Chilean Naval records of incalculable value for the reinterpretation of the colonial history of the island. Also, to Cristián Moreno Pakarati, Miguel Fuentes and others; who have shed new light on interpreting the Rapa Nui contribution in the shaping of history. For bibliographic details, see references.

### Chapter 3. Interculturalism in the most isolated school in the world

*“Easter Island! Rapa Nui! When studying geography, my favourite subject, it filled me with pride to read the paragraph that says: ‘Chile has in Oceania Easter Island, the only colony that South America may flaunt’. The only colony was ours! I found it natural that we were compared to the British”* (Pedro Prado, “La Reina Rapanui”, 1914 in Foerster, 2010a, p. 51)

In this section I describe the early times of the schooling process in Rapa Nui, to emphasize that the presence (or absence) of the native language and culture in the classroom is a theme present in formal education since its inception on the island. However, the following accounts suggest that the ‘educational mission’ enforced by the Chilean authority, was largely grounded in the belief that teaching Spanish was the main priority; thus disregarding any potential value of the native language. In turn, the “Rapa Nui’s positive evaluation of Spanish as the language of trade and litigation was an important motivation in the development of bilingualism. Communication in Spanish proved crucial, for example, in the Rapa Nui’s numerous attempts starting in the 1890s to negotiate better treatment by the company and later direct appeals with the government to bring a civil administration to the island” (Makihara, 2004, p. 531).

Already in 1917, Vives Solar published the first bilingual instructional text: a book developed to ‘educate’ the Rapa Nui. This work was done with the assistance of John Araki Bornier; whom the friar Estella would describe as “the most intelligent of men in Pascua” (DeEstella, 1920, p. 105). The book was called “Te Poki Rapanui: Te puka mo hakama’a e ma oriai ite tangata honui o Rapanui (haka riva riva o)” (sic); with a corresponding title in

Spanish<sup>36</sup> (Vives-Solar, 1917a). Broadly, it attempted to translate into Rapa Nui language knowledge of the Western world that would provide the native students with ‘references’ to enter this new educational worldview. As the book’s title in Spanish suggests, the perspective of Vives Solar was that Rapa Nui people should learn ‘useful knowledge’.

The book was meant to be a kind of bilingual syllabus (Rapa Nui-Castilian), and it begins with a description of the globe: “The world is round, like an orange, slightly flattened at the poles...”. It continues translating specific concepts, such as the cardinal points, translated as “Tokerau nui nui”; corresponding to Papakina, Puhirongo, Marengorengo, Lui hi ha ho (north, south, east and west respectively). Despite the fact that the annotation of the Rapa Nui language at the time lacked the conventions that exist today, it constitutes -if not the first- one of the earliest published texts in the native language with a Latin alphabet.

Vives Solar locates the island in the global context: refers to the ‘geography and main features’ of other islands, countries and their respective colonizers, ending with “Pascua, which belongs to Chile, and whose religion is Roman Catholic Apostolic”. The second part of the book refers to the creation of the earth and man by the Christian God, and the third part describes the discovery of America; the struggle with the Mapuche people<sup>37</sup> and the independence of Chile, “after which the Chileans have always chosen very good Presidents who have made people happy”. The book also tells the story of Chilean naval ‘hero’ Arturo Prat, the civil war under President Balmaceda’s administration, and explains that the contemporary Chilean President was Jorge Alessandri. Finally, it includes some stories

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<sup>36</sup> “El Niño Pascuense: Libro de lectura y conocimientos útiles para el uso de los habitantes de la isla de Pascua”. The Spanish title can be roughly translated as ‘the Rapa Nui child: a book to read and useful knowledge for the use of the inhabitants of Easter Island’.

<sup>37</sup> Mapuche are a group of indigenous inhabitants of south-central Chile and south-western Argentina, including parts of present-day Patagonia. The collective term refers to a wide-ranging ethnicity composed of various groups who share a common social, religious and economic structure, as well as a common linguistic heritage as Mapuzungün speakers.

from Tahiti, Pitcairn; and refers the establishment of French missionary Eugene Eyraud and his evangelising work, until his death in Rapa Nui. In words of a former educationalist in Easter Island, “it is a [part of a] compendium of Universal History and History of Chile, part of the Genesis, Geography, Oceania and some notes of the first missionary on the Island, Eugene Eyraud, in fourteen pages” (Arredondo 2012, p. 61). Overall, the contents are manifestly guided by the interest of locating the island as a ‘colony of Chile’; exposing some of the main ‘Western myths’ (how God created humans, and how war created nations) in a particularly idealistic tone. The book would be re-edited by a Chilean publisher five years later, extended by the author (Vives-Solar, 1923).

Apart from being perhaps an ‘exotic read’ for the odd mainlander who received it, it is not clear in the literature of the time if the book was used to teach Rapa Nui students on the island. What can be said though, is that in the intermittent classes carried out by Vives-Solar, he had the support of a ‘native assistant’, Juan Araki Bornier; as expressed forty years later in an account of the island’s formal education made by Englert (in Foerster 2012b, p. 60).

At the time of the publication of ‘Te Poki Rapanui’, Vives Solar had been dismissed from his duties as a response to the accusation made by Bishop Rafael Edwards; namely, that “the preceptor does not provide any service on the island and leads a life of shame<sup>38</sup> and that it is necessary to designate in Pascua a [female] preceptor of the mixed school and provide it with all the necessary elements” (Edwards 1916, in Foerster 2012b, p. 5<sup>39</sup>).

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<sup>38</sup> This has been associated with the fact that he left two ‘illegitimate’ daughters; according to Hotus and others (1988), as a result of the sub-delegates abuse (p. 381-382).

<sup>39</sup> From: November 27<sup>th</sup> 1916, letter from Rafael Edwards to the Ministry of Education. Archive Ministerio de Educación, Vol. 3506.

Replacing Vives Solar, a new naval sub-delegate was appointed; an ex-police officer, ‘with much experience as a former practitioner of the Army’<sup>40</sup>. Exequiel Acuña Landeros would be later nicknamed Vere Oru<sup>41</sup> by the Rapa Nui, referring to his thick beard. Acuña – a family man – arrived to the island in company of his pregnant wife Rosa, five children of theirs and his sister-in-law, Leoncia Rivas de Rebolledo. While Rosa would assist in schooling activities, the latter would be the newly appointed preceptor of the school. With Acuña, a new chapter of the Chilean attempts to install state power and authority would begin; increasingly connected to their ‘civilizing mission’ in the following years. According to Englert, “the natives that were then his students remember him as a severe teacher that knew that ‘with blood the word goes in’”<sup>42</sup> (Englert 1955, in Foerster 2012b, p. 61). The new sub-delegate would remain as such until 1926, with only a brief interruption in 1922.

Drawing on earlier work on this historical period, made with Foerster et al. (2010); “we emphasize the most relevant”. The Chilean authority (at the time, inseparably linked to the Catholic Church) had a concern about the links that the CEDIP was establishing with the community; but also for its ‘civilizing’ and ‘moral’ role. It could be said that, at the time, these roles were understood by the Chilean government as those of the church, the school, but also the work of the sub-delegate. Since 1917, the state believed that this ‘civilizing’ task – or of ‘discipline’ as Foucault would say – now depended more on its interventions; than on the CEDIP or the Rapa Nui community. To achieve this goal, the state of Chile had to stop being a nominal entity and become a powerful reality in ‘Isla de Pascua’ before the

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<sup>40</sup> March 27<sup>th</sup>, 1917. La Unión de Valparaíso (Chilean newspaper).

<sup>41</sup> Literal translation would be ‘pig hair’. Presumably used as a metaphor for the stubborn or ‘hard-witted’.

<sup>42</sup> I have literally translated the biblical expression used by Englert ‘la letra con sangre entra’, which in English is known as “spare the rod, spoil the child” (Proverbs 13:24). The quote is taken from: July 25, 1955, Letter from Sebastián Englert to Samuel Flores, Capuchin archive (in Foerster 2012b, p. 61).

community and the CEDIP. The latter, laid out the naval sub-delegate's functions on the island, generally allowing him to interfere in all aspects of everyday life of the Rapa Nui community, as well as in those practices that might undermine colonial rule. Henceforth, the sub-delegate would be responsible for monitoring the performance of the school and of enforcing compulsory attendance for all children (male and female) between seven and fourteen years of age. Among the listed duties, one was to send for missing students, and apply a penalty of one to six hours of work if a parent refused to send their children to school for over a week (Cristino et al., 1984, p. 58).

1917 would also be the first time that a study programme for the 'mixed school of Easter Island' appeared in the Navy's documental archive<sup>43</sup>. In two hundred and twenty seven words, it considers nine different subjects, namely: 'lessons of things' (to teach names and pronunciation of 'real' objects of ordinary use); (Spanish) language; reading; writing; arithmetics; singing and gymnastics ('religious and patriotic hymns' with 'gymnastic steps and school dances'); 'economy, hygiene and labours'; general history, geography and 'patria' (sic)<sup>44</sup> and (Christian) religion (Cristino et al., 1984; Foerster, 2012a). From these years onwards, schooling would be more of a regular activity (Cristino et al., 1984, p. 57) that the Rapa Nui people would increasingly engage with, to gain access to Spanish language, and thus the 'symbolic universe' of the 'white', Chilean, Western knowledge traditions that was fused within the curriculum of the time.

The documents available from the Navy's archive have no indication of a space available for Rapa Nui language and culture to develop through school; however, most certainly it was one of the 'challenges' of these appointed educators. Sub-delegate Acuña would address this challenge by

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<sup>43</sup> Both in Cristino (1984) and Foerster (2012b).

<sup>44</sup> Literal translation is homeland, or 'motherland'; however the Spanish word patria implies a country of birth, or to which one belongs by historic or legal ties.



obtaining some 'help' from a Rapa Nui youngster, to carry out school activities. Though he did this 'unofficially', in a letter addressing Bishop Edwards, he explained: "when I opened the school I chose the girl<sup>45</sup> I believed [to be] a 'little better', to assist me in school" (1921)<sup>46</sup>. The appointment of two young Rapa Nui as teachers would be officialised by the following sub-delegate, Carlos Recabarren Larahona. From his memories is the following: "Regarding my permission that the Supreme Government gave me, it was very good and helpful, both in Valparaíso and Santiago; I was much catered for by the authorities and they promised me everything I asked for the Island. I also got the appointment for the teachers of the School Nº 81; Mariana Atam as Director and Andrés Chávez as a teacher; such appointments were much needed" (Recabarren 1926-1928, p. 28<sup>47</sup>).

The practice of these Rapa Nui teachers is not readily grasped in available literature; did they use the native language to address their students? Did they follow the study programmes given by the Navy a decade earlier?

What can be answered is that in February 1930, Admiral Edgardo von Schroeders arrived to the island. Von Schroeders was sent by Chilean government to make an inventory of the 'state property', and propose a plan for the 'administration and improvement' of the island. Regarding the school, von Schroeders suggests "suppressing the native teachers for nationals to educate the Pascuense [people]" and secondly "to suppress the Pascuense dialect for the Castilian". The reason he gives for such a

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<sup>45</sup> With no doubt he refers to Mariana Atan. According to the 1918 census made by Estella, she would have been fourteen years old at that time. Her parents were José Atamu Aharekaihiwa and Hilaria Maori (DeEstella 1921, p. 64).

<sup>46</sup> From: Letter from Acuña to Bishop Edwards, August 8<sup>th</sup> 1921; Capuchin archive, in Foerster, Ramírez & Zurob 2010 (p. 15).

<sup>47</sup> Personal translation of Recabarren's memories, which are in a volume of 394 folios, kept in the 'Archivo Nacional de Santiago' (National Archives of Santiago). Between folios 1-50 are located his "Memories and General Balance" of the years 1926, 1927 and 1928. These were regularly sent back to his superior, the Director General del Territorio Marítimo de Valparaíso' (general director of the maritime territory of Valparaíso). Copies of these were available to me during my stay on the island.

recommendation is that "they are Chilean and should speak as on the continent. The Pascuense dialect, is not worth for trade and industry, it serves only for them to speak to each other without one knowing what it is about"<sup>48</sup> (Foerster 2012b, p. 23).

The chief of police at the time, Cupertino Martínez, admits to be von Schroeder's 'informant', and further discredits the native teachers' appointment made by subdelegate Recabarren:

*"With regard to school education of the natives I could impose myself [of the idea] that it was completely null, because the two teachers who acted as such, a man and a woman, with a monthly pay of \$440 for the first and \$230 for the second, both kanakas did not know a word of our language. But nevertheless, they had the support of the subdelegate Mr. Recabarren who had a marital life with the teacher called Mariana Atam, and the [male] teacher was her nephew. With this precedent only, V.S.<sup>49</sup> can appreciate the moral regime that existed at the time among representative people of the Island. On arrival of the schooner 'General Baquedano' to the Island, on January 30 of 1930, I gave account of these facts to Mr. Commander [von Schroeders]. Once personally informed of the referred background information, suspended both professors from their duty, becoming the undersigned responsible for these positions, which I fulfilled with the satisfaction of the natives, until December 11<sup>th</sup> of the same year" (in Foerster 2012b, p. 21)<sup>50</sup>.*

The harsh critics placed by these reports on the native teachers, according to Arredondo (2012), are "not shared by some Rapanui people who remember the good work of Mariana Atan. Although she did not manage

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<sup>48</sup> Von Schroeders, E. (1930). Ministerio de Marina, Confidential section, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 1930.

<sup>49</sup> Formal way of addressing authority. Stands for 'Vuestra Señoría'; similar to 'your honor' in English.

<sup>50</sup> Archivo Siglo XX, Ministerio de Marina, Vol.3260.

the Castilian well, she imparted classes in Rapanui language which made students feel more comfortable and willing to learn” (p. 64).

However, in response to von Schroeder’s accusation, the native teachers were replaced, first, by the rigid police officer. Five years later Israel Drapkin, a Chilean physician that took part in a French-Belgian scientific mission in Rapa Nui, would leave another impression on the ‘educational status of the islanders’. In his ‘contribution to the study of the Pascuenses’, he accounts:

*“Public instruction on the island, up until a year ago, was rudimentary. Long periods with courses of no kind, alternated with a few months of more or less incidental classes. Only in 1934 did the Public School reorganize, under dependence of the ‘Dirección Provincial de Instrucción Pública de Valparaíso’<sup>51</sup>. This is the main reason for the existence of a large number of illiterates, despite being the ‘Pascuenses’ very intelligent and having a true desire for knowledge of all kinds... Being Isla de Pascua, possession of the government of Chile, the official language is Spanish, but because up to date the direct influence of our Supreme Government has been reduced only to the presence of the sub-delegate on the island, which often also fills the duties of teacher, civil registry official, etc. it is not surprising that if most Pascuense men understand the Castilian, only a rather small group can express themselves correctly in that language. On the other hand, among women who are, generally, more conservative with their language and traditions, very few of them can hold an ordinary conversation in Spanish. Considering as illiterate all those natives who do not read or write any language (an appreciable amount of them read and write the Pascuense, Tahitian, etc.), and without counting children under ten years, there are currently on the island 147 illiterate*

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<sup>51</sup> Can be translated as: Provincial Direction of Public Instruction of Valparaíso (lit.).

*with 46.11 percent, and 126 read and write, with 53.89 percent. There are 183 children under 10 years” (Drapkin, 1935, pp. 290-291).*

The growing engagement of the Rapa Nui with Spanish literacy was also a way to access spaces of negotiation with the colonial powers. In Foerster’s exhaustive archival revision; he found several letters written by Rapa Nui people, addressed to mainland authorities such as the President of Chile, Bishop Edwards, and others that - they must have expected - would understand, and react to their complaints. These complaints were usually related to power abuse of the political or ecclesiastical authorities on the island<sup>52</sup>.

In 1937, Bishop Edwards managed to obtain Vatican’s approval to transfer the ‘spiritual tuition’ (Arredondo, 2012, p. 67) of Rapa Nui to the ‘Vicariato Apostólico de la Araucanía’<sup>53</sup> (Apostolic Vicariate of Araucanía), this established the Capuchin Sebastian Englert as permanent parish of the island’s church. The following year, ‘Monsignor’ Guido Beck, Vicar and Bishop for the Apostolic Vicariate of Araucanía, would travel to Rapa Nui to introduce Sisters Margarita María Lespay and the German Gertrud Koetter, from the congregation of the ‘Hermanas Misioneras Catequistas de Boroa’ (‘missionary sisters catechists of Boroa’) (Arredondo, 2012, p. 67; Cristino et al., 1984, p. 59). These ‘monjitas’ (‘nuns’), as they are remembered on the island, were the new teachers for the school (appointed as the Fiscal Primary school Nº 72, of Isla de Pascua), which would remain under the responsibility of the ‘missionary sisters’ until 1971 (Arredondo, 2013, p. 124). That year the direction of the school would be left in hands of Jacobo Hey Paoa; although some of the missionary sisters remain in school for another three years (Foerster, 2012c, p. 1). Throughout this time, several members of

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<sup>52</sup> Rolf Foerster, personal communication (2009).

<sup>53</sup> Araucanía is the name given by colonial (political and ecclesiastical) powers to Mapuche lands south of Bío Bío river.

this congregation would be appointed for two to three years on the island, and only a few of them remained for decades.

From here onwards, school would be more of a regular activity; and since 1939, a record of the educational activities was kept (Cristino et al., 1984, p. 59). Several authors gave perspectives on the development of the schooling process in these years; either purposely, or within wider historical accounts of the period (Arredondo, 2012, 2013; Cristino et al., 1984; Fischer, 2005; Foerster, 2012a, 2012b, 2012d; McCall, 1976). Some of these emphasize the indifference of the Chilean state to the education of the Rapa Nui, such as Cristino and others: “Until 1938 there was no major concern for the school and the quality of teaching in Easter Island” (1984, p. 59). For others, it is through the expansion of colonial authority on the island that attention toward the ‘civilizing mission’ of Chile would be furthered.

For the purposes of the present research, I will highlight the main issues that arise from the historical accounts. What first that becomes clear, is that the establishment of formal education on the island, was primarily focused on teaching the Spanish language. The student’s native language is remarked as a ‘difficulty’ or as an obstacle in the attempt to give these children a ‘proper education’. In this sense, the school record gives clear allusions. In 1941;

*“...to appreciate the educational labour developed by the religious Sister Margarita and Sister Gertrudiz, it is to be regarded that they have had to struggle with admirable patience and perseverance against the idiosyncrasy of the students and most of all against the Rapanui language, because the first need has been to teach Castilian” (Foerster, 2012b, p. 39)<sup>54</sup>.*

These accounts, paired with the recognition of the sister’s ‘devoted labour’,

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<sup>54</sup> 1941, December. School Record, Year 1940/41/42/43/44.

are typical in the reports sent back to the Chilean government by different ‘inspection’ officials who would visit Rapa Nui. However, the struggle ‘against’ the native language did not prevent some of the nuns from learning to speak Rapa Nui to communicate with their students. Recently, Foerster (2012c) recorded the perspective of some of these religious women<sup>55</sup> who worked as educationalists on the island. In his account: “Regarding the use of the Rapa Nui language, they were aware that the main work of the school was teaching Castilian (‘everything was taught in Castilian’), nonetheless, they all knew the value of the native language for teaching [children in their] early years; some nuns learned the Rapa Nui, especially Margarita Lespay Manquepán (native to the huilliche<sup>56</sup> area of San Juan de la Costa)” (p. 3).

It could be said that formal education in Rapa Nui, in a way, has always been intercultural and bilingual, inasmuch there have always been different cultural groups, and different languages present in the classroom. The importance given to each of these languages however, varies greatly. Fischer (2001) within his postcolonial perspective, emphasizes the colonizing role of education in these years, pointing out the harsh methods used by the nuns to achieve ‘discipline’ in their students, namely, physical punishment. In the oral memories of many Rapa Nui today, these punishments appear clearly, particularly among the adult and elder generations. In the words of a Rapa Nui woman close to her fifties at the time of my undergraduate thesis:

*“I remember the nuns, when we did not learn – not to me, I was never hit - but they hit my friends. They lifted the skirt, legs like that, and with a rod of ohe<sup>57</sup>, with that they gave them in the legs ... you could*

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<sup>55</sup> “Their testimonies refer us to the last years of the 50’s and the first half of the 60’s.... We interviewed four of these sisters who were in Pascua: Emiliana Vallejo in Boroa; Rosario Flores in Temuco; Petronila Neira (Director of the school in the early 60’s) in the Quilacahuín mission of Osorno; [and] Esperanza Leal in Santiago” (Foerster, 2012c, p. 1).

<sup>56</sup> The ‘huilliche’ are the southern partiality of the Mapuche macro-ethnic group of Chile.

<sup>57</sup> ‘Ohe’ is the Rapa Nui word for a type of bamboo, from the Bambuseae family.

*see the nun's veins were coming out because she taught us but we didn't grasp the Castilian" (Zurob, 2009b, p. 99).*

However, Foerster says, "none of this appears in the memory of these religious [women], perhaps because of the naturalization of body pedagogies and the physical punishment common until the 60's in many educational institutions [in Chile]" (2012c, p. 3-4). On the contrary, the women interviewed by Foerster recall the 'great consideration' they had from the community: "they were called *paratenía* (*sic*), that is, 'virgin'. 'They crossed themselves before us', 'when they saw us, they said: the *virgencita*<sup>58</sup> is coming to the house'. Some thought that 'we had fallen from heaven'. In school this was manifested through the children's respect, their behaviour in class and in the community's favourable appraisal of their work ([i.e] if a child missed classes, the mother would take him/her to school)" (2012c, p. 1). There seems to be a double perception: on the one hand the nuns were considered harsh in their teaching methods and indifferent to the local language and customs, and yet there is a widespread belief that thanks to their rigor, good results were obtained.

On the other hand, and despite the fact that the school was managed by 'religious personnel', the contents delivered were clearly aligned with the Chilean Ministry of Education; "This meant attachment to their curricula and teaching methods, which is consistent with the reports contained in 'School Record', especially the accounts of visitors" (Foerster 2012c, p. 2). Indeed, there is no questioning of the authorities regarding the educational work of the sisters, who were continuously 'admired' for their 'selfless' work. The sisters who taught required a qualification to do so, and they were paid by the Ministry. In the opinion of a visitor<sup>59</sup> in 1957:

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<sup>58</sup> The voice, '*virgencita*', literally means 'little virgin'. The term is mainly used in religious contexts, thus appealing to the 'Virgin Mary'.

<sup>59</sup> According to Foerster, this could be Benjamin Subercaseux. However the signature on the report is illegible (in Foerster, 2012b, p. 55).

*“Many of the natives possess a sharp and intelligent mind. They are literate, although we are much deceived about their knowledge of Castilian... our conceptual language or necessarily complicated sentences of any cultivated man from the mainland, they pretend to understand, but really have not understood anything, especially women and children. The main cause of this deficiency is - in my view - that teachers (both primary and religious teachers) ignore the Pascuense language; and it is impossible to teach a real Spanish to the natives if we don't give them the translation of our words into their own language, especially, lacking the Pascuense language for abstract concepts, so common in ours. It would be convenient to establish that in Pascua the official language should be bilingual; and that in no case should a type of chilenidad<sup>60</sup> involving the extinction of the native language be imposed, since the latter is closely linked to traditional and moral values of that race, which would disappear with it, being in our interest to conserve them. Our primary teachers tend to suppress the native and insert in its place the Spanish, as badly assimilated by the student, as great is the ignorance of the teacher in the Pascuense language” (in Foerster, 2012b, p. 55-56).*

Though the account of this anonymous visitor is probably one of few who recognized a positive link between language, traditions and moral values; he nonetheless had no problem in asserting that the Spanish language is capable of greater complexity than the Rapa Nui, which in turn ‘lacks abstract concepts’. How he could have come to this conclusion? Did he learn the language before writing his conclusions? Most probably not.

Furthermore, in the years in which the school was administered by the missionary sisters, several lay teachers from the mainland would be incorporated, corresponding with the growing needs of students to be taught at different educational levels. In 1948, the school offered courses up

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<sup>60</sup> Could be translated as ‘Chileanity’.



until year five: twenty years later it would reach year eight; thus completing the primary level according to the Chilean educational system<sup>61</sup>. Finally, in Foerster's account of the sisters' perspective, "they consider unjust the accusation of 'Chileanization' because they argue that for the Rapa Nui, to learn Castilian did not imply abandoning their culture, which was consistent with the parent's desire, who knew that a good grasp of Castilian would make their future stay in the mainland more bearable" (2012c, p. 2).

The second half of the twentieth century would increasingly provide opportunities for Rapa Nui people to leave their island to pursue further studies in the Chilean continent. This was made possible through 'scholarships' given to the highest achievers in the island's school (many of these funded by the 'Sociedad de Amigos de Isla de Pascua'<sup>62</sup>). In 1957, Catalina Hey Paoa would be the first qualified Rapa Nui teacher to work in the island's school<sup>63</sup>, followed by several others. Five years later another 'visiting inspector' would leave in his report more compliments for the 'magnificent' labour of the religious educators, and expressly advise the school to:

*"be careful not to destroy tradition, and to preserve possibilities for folklore, dialect and [local] customs, while slowly incorporating the children into the continental culture. I gathered the staff and gave them some suggestions; I asked them to form choirs to sing popular*

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<sup>61</sup> 'Sociedad de Amigos de Isla de Pascua' ('Society of Friends of Easter Island'); is a philanthropic institution founded in Santiago 1947 (Fischer 2005, p. 195-196). Among its members were several upper-class Chileans, who –among other actions– influenced the advancement of the schools levels (see Barahona 1951). Some members 'adopted' Rapa Nui children and youngsters in their homes, to provide them the opportunity to be ('formally') educated (Zurob, 2009b, p. 100).

<sup>62</sup> In 1953 the school added year 6, and in 1967, year 7. The educational system in Chile consists of eight years of primary school (enseñanza básica) and four years of secondary school (enseñanza media). This has changed in 2009 educational reform, though not applied until the moment. In the words of Riet Delsing; "The full installation of formal school education in Rapa Nui has been agonizingly slow" (2009, p. 326).

<sup>63</sup> Information from the personal archive of Catalina Hey, (Foerster, 2012b, p. 65).

*music; sports clubs for which they can seek from any aviator or marine to advise and teach them. If any continental ladies or gentlemen wish to cooperate in school, the Director is authorized to accept help but subject to schedules, plans and functions that she determines*<sup>64</sup>

Although it is the second allusion in the reports to the importance of ‘maintaining’ Rapa Nui tradition in school, the account of this ‘anonymous’ inspector points toward ‘incorporation into continental culture’; characteristic of the politics of assimilation popular in those years. Regarding the concrete ‘suggestions’ he leaves; is it possible that these ‘recommendations’ stemmed from his gathering of the opinions of Rapa Nui people? Perhaps Lucía Tuki Make, whom he ‘presented’ to the school<sup>65</sup>, as she had ‘recently graduated’ as a teacher, gave him some of her impressions? I cannot say. However, the following year another Rapa Nui, Alfonso Rapu, obtained a teaching degree in Chile, and once back on the island he participated in the organization of a brigade of scouts, adult literacy courses in the evenings and formed with Luis Pate Paoa<sup>66</sup> a dance ensemble called “Hotu Matu’a Ava Rei Pua<sup>67</sup>” (Arredondo, 2013, p. 122).

Alfonso Rapu would subsequently be the visible leader of the ‘1964 uprising’ that ultimately led to the recognition of civil rights for the Rapa Nui, and thus, the end of the military (naval) rule over the island.

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<sup>64</sup> 1962, January. Isla de Pascua. School Record Year 1962-63-64-65-66, (Foerster, 2012b, p. 70). Once again the signature is illegible.

<sup>65</sup> Presumably they travelled to Rapa Nui aboard the same naval ship.

<sup>66</sup> His name is alternatively recorded as Luis Avaka Paoa (1926-2008); known on the island as ‘Papa Kiko’. His work had great impact in the development of Rapa Nui culture in modern times (particularly in oral arts; storytelling, songs, dance, among others), and he is remembered for his immense contribution in the flourishing of local knowledge tradition. For example, see McCall and Bendrups (2008).

<sup>67</sup> The name refers to the first settlers of ‘Rapa Nui’, according to local tradition.

To finish this section, it is interesting to recall that in the letter sent<sup>68</sup> to the President of Chile at the time, there was list of complaints regarding the abusive power of the naval authority and the lack of civil rights (to vote, to choose their representatives, among others); listed as reasons explaining why the Rapa Nui people in those years, ‘were not free’. One of these reasons was:

*“Because we cannot speak through the phone with our children on the continent in our language, and be able to tell them all these things and the things that with affection we can express, because many of us do not know much Castilian”<sup>69</sup>.*

In the quote, the writers refer to the possibility of communicating with the children and youngsters that were studying in the mainland, through the naval radio station. According to Hotus (1998), the use of Rapa Nui language had been banned from school in 1956 (p. 166). Though I could not find the legal documentation to support these statements, it is quite possible that the use of Rapa Nui language was seen as a threat by the continental authorities, especially when they could not understand it. Furthermore the sanction on the native language, if not enforced through law, was certainly perceived by the Rapa Nui as such, as I have personally heard during my time on the island<sup>70</sup>.

Back to the 1964 letter; it concludes with the following statement: “With this we ask colonialism be over and we will be again the Pascuenses we are,

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<sup>68</sup> The letter was sent secretly through one of the missionary sisters, at the time deemed as the only way to ‘get past’ the naval authority (Alfonso Rapu 2009, personal communication).

<sup>69</sup> My translation, emphasis in the original. The letter is dated 4<sup>th</sup> December, 1964; published in “*Las Noticias de la Ultima Hora*” on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 1965. It was signed by 56 Rapa Nui men, assumingly, each of them representing a Rapa Nui hua’ai (extended family tribes).

<sup>70</sup> Hotus also affirms that Rapa Nui language would be later prohibited in ‘public meetings’ by local authorities in 1982, namely the governor Ariel González Cornejos (1987, p. 19; 1998, p. 171). See also Delsing 2009 (p. 183).

a people who can sing but *without being commanded to sing*.” All in all, the subsequent enactment of the ‘Ley Pascua’ brought a number of improvements to the life conditions of Rapa Nui, changing particularly the oppressive rules set out by the Navy and the limitation of mobility for the Rapa Nui (both inside and outside of the island). However it would also be the start of a series of new problems, and a strengthening of a process of language shift from Rapa Nui to Spanish.

In 1971 the missionary sisters leave the school in hands of the second Rapa Nui principal in history; Jacobo Hey Paoa. In the account of Arredondo, “the exit of the sisters affected in a way, the teaching of children, who were used to their system” (2013, p. 124)<sup>71</sup>. In the next section, I move closer to recent times to give a perspective of the initial attempts to find a ‘good’ space for Rapa Nui language and culture in formal education.

### **Making a place for indigenous knowledge in education: agency as resistance**

From a broader perspective, since the mid-twentieth century ‘Easter Island’ would become known worldwide, largely by the publication in Europe of the books chronicling the expedition of Thor Heyerdahl in the 50’s<sup>72</sup>. Later, with the opening of the Santiago-Easter Island route (Lan Chile Airlines), the conditions pointed towards the development of a heritage tourism, which would guide the structural adjustment of the Island’s economy into capitalism (Porteous, 1981). A second boom befell in the 90’s with the filming of the North American movie “Rapa Nui”, produced by Hollywood; and the Chilean soap opera “Iorana”. This had a strong impact on the structure of the island’s economy and the identitary processes of the Rapa

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<sup>71</sup> The ‘change of system’ referred to in this quote, can be furthered considering the later work of (Delsing, Arredondo, & Largo, 1998; González Nualart, 1984)

<sup>72</sup> Anecdotaly, in my personal experience working as a tourist guide in the island, most of the those coming from Europe or the United States recalled reading Heyerdahl’s book in their childhood, and since then having ‘the dream’ of visiting the misterious Rapa Nui.

Nui, who started to see themselves through the ‘exoticizing lens’ of the ‘Other’, in terms of Edward Said ([1978] 1995).

Over time and with the expansion of Chilean presence on the island, colonialism<sup>73</sup> did not end, as the Rapa Nui signatories requested in their letter to the President; rather, the imposition of new ‘ways of life’ would be intensified. For the establishment of public services, a large number of mainlanders were sent to live in the island. In the words of Makihara (2004); the process of language shift “became greatly accelerated after the mid-1960s arrival of a large Chilean civil administration and the opening of regular air passenger travel to the island. The habitual monolingual use of Rapa Nui came to be replaced by increasing use of Spanish and new syncretic Rapa Nui speech styles, and more and more Rapa Nui children are growing up as native Spanish speakers” (p. 529).

Accordingly, the process inaugurated in these years has been called the ‘Chileanization’ of the island (Mccall, 1997, p. 118). Up until 1965 the amount of Chileans on the island barely reached the number of 143 individuals (Cristino et al., 1984), and the Rapa Nui people counted approximately 900 (Makihara, 1999, p. 69). After the enactment of the Ley Pascua and the arrival of mainlanders commissioned to establish national public services, the number of Chileans ascended to 602 in 1968 (Cristino et al., 1984), whereas the Rapa Nui people increased only to 1158 (Makihara, 1999, p. 69). This entailed a new ‘lifestyle’ previously unknown, and the deepening of the

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<sup>73</sup> Douglas Porteous (1981) attempted a definition of colonization periods in the following manner: “Viewed in the context of an analysis of centre-periphery relations, the island’s development could well be divided into: (i) a colonial period, up to 1888; (ii) a neo-colonial period, 1888-1952; and (iii) a period of internal colonialism, which began in 1952 and has yet to terminate” (p. vi).

miscegenation process that had begun earlier in the century<sup>74</sup>.

Drawing on the work of Miki Makihara (Makihara, 1999, 2004, 2013), it can be said that different spheres of interaction were initially configured in Spanish and Rapa Nui. The author calls this ‘colonial diglossia’; “the earlier diglossic separation of the colonial and local languages according to institutional spheres” (2013, p. 441). Chilean Spanish became a dominant language inasmuch it was used by figures of symbolic authority, such as school teachers, colonial authorities and employers in domestic labour and public institutions. Rapa Nui language on the other hand, remained in ‘inside’ spheres of interaction, usually amongst kin (Makihara, 2004, p. 530). All in all, the younger generations of the growing Rapa Nui society, transitioned toward bilingualism roughly in the last thirty years of the twentieth century. However, the spaces available for Rapa Nui and Spanish would be persistently characterized by asymmetry, rather than a balanced coexistence.

After the establishment of the civil administration, Rapa Nui people would increasingly engage with the new institutional scenarios. Their language however, had no place in these, and was perceived as a communication barrier for Rapa Nui whenever they needed to express themselves to the Chilean state’s employees. Thus, if the indigenous language had been mainly understood before as a ‘problem’ in terms of political negotiation with colonial authorities, and more recently in the formal education realm; from here onwards it would influence the possibility of adults and the elderly to receive positive attention from various public services installed on Rapa Nui since 1966. Communicating effectively in Spanish with the agents of public services, mainly in those related to health, formal education,

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<sup>74</sup> In the early 1930s’, the studies of Dr. Israel Drapkin had stated that, of the 456 Rapa Nui living in the island, 159 could be considered ‘pure native’ while the rest ‘presented a degree of blood mixture’ with (in order of relevance) Tahitians, Germans, French, Tuamotu, Chileans, British, Chinese, Americans and Italians (1935, p. 289). In the 70’s, according to Mccall, less than 60 people were exclusively of Rapa Nui ancestry (Mccall, 1986).

justice and land rights<sup>75</sup> began to gain prominence in the following decades.

Gradually, Spanish positioned itself as the essential tool for both civic and social life in Hapa Roa. Moreover, the acquisition of civil rights gave the Rapa Nui freedom, for the first time, to travel in and out of the island, which would intensify the ‘diasporic’ process that the islanders had started in earlier decades (Muñoz, 2007)<sup>76</sup>. The need to learn Spanish was therefore experienced by those Rapa Nui who stayed in the island, as well as those who travelled to the mainland for study or work. Undoubtedly, these generations were marked by discrimination and communication difficulties<sup>77</sup> that fuelled the decision of Rapa Nui parents to promote Spanish in their children (Zurob, 2009b). Hence, the different languages began to blend within the family, also as a consequence of increasing miscegenation between Rapa Nui and Chileans, as well as other foreigners.

In the experience of a Rapa Nui woman: “Here people already wanted to speak Spanish. The television came, then the radio... more people... so my parents, with my younger siblings, they spoke more Spanish with them. I can tell you that I can’t talk with them a constant and fluent Rapa Nui. I can not. Maybe they understand, but for them to answer in Rapa Nui, no...” (Zurob, 2009b, p.101).

The imposition of Spanish through different colonial agents would fuel the growth of an ‘intergenerational gap’; which implied that the interactional spaces in Rapa Nui language between elders and adults on one hand, and

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<sup>75</sup> This statement is founded on my previous experience (see Zurob, 2009b, p. 92-160), and was worked through in the context of a publication in press, authored by Virginia Haoa, Paulina Torres and myself.

<sup>76</sup> Previous ‘diasporic’ movements had been the massive exodus towards Tahiti and Mangareva in 1871; and later –because of the mobility restrictions imposed by the Company and the Chilean Navy- the clandestine fugue of at least eight boats between 1940 and 1950 (Muñoz, 2007, p. 39-41).

<sup>77</sup> See for example the thesis of Lilian González; “Isla de Pascua: Problemática educacional” (‘Easter Island: educational issue’) (1984). Also, my previous work on the subject (Zurob, 2009a, 2009b).

children and youngsters on the other, were progressively restricted (Zurob, 2009, p. 102). The ill-effects of this gap started to be felt by the community, and as they became aware of the dangers, actions were taken to incorporate Rapa Nui language and knowledge in school curricula. In addition, the increasing amount of people migrating to work or study abroad had fuelled the local demands for the creation of workplaces, the establishment of formal education in all levels (Hotus, 1998, p. 167), and the creation of a 'vocational school' in Rapa Nui<sup>78</sup>.

On November 26 1975, under the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, what was then the 'Ministerio de Educación Pública' [Ministry of Public Education] issued a decree, Nº 991, which authorized for the following school year (1976), the application of a 'special curriculum and introduction to working life' in 'Isla de Pascua'<sup>79</sup>. "It consisted of a varied plan for years seven and eight of primary school, where students were able to choose between electricity, handicrafts in wood or wool, dance and folklore or printing on fabric. And a differential plan for first and second year of secondary education, which had basically two areas: hospitality and tourism; and crafts" (Arredondo, 2013, p. 126-127).

This concession, considering the political situation at the time, is more than surprising; however, as Delsing affirms "The general showed a special interest in Rapa Nui, which stemmed from his geopolitical and nationalist goals for Chile. One of his ambitions was the homogenization and

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<sup>78</sup> Back in 1965, a Chilean magazine published a note entitled "The awakening of the Moai", which I translated as follows: "Easter Island desires: in a memorandum written by the islanders that the President should read this week, the islanders condense their aspirations. They demand a canning industry to be install in Pascua... They also want a Vocational School to be created...Annually, between sixty and one hundred people, both adults and children, are migrating" (February 4, VEA Magazine, No. 1345; in Foerster 2012b, p. 79).

<sup>79</sup> "El decreto 991, de 26 de noviembre de 1975, de Educación Pública, autorizó, a contar del año escolar 1976, la aplicación de un Plan Especial de Estudios y de Apertura a la vida laboral en la comuna Subdelegación de Isla de Pascua, de la Provincia de Valparaíso, V region" (Decretos 1.194 - 1.304, Editorial Jurídica de Chile. Footnote 158, p. 325)



integration of the Chilean population into the nation-state” (2009, p. 169).

The 1975 ministerial decree coincided with a scientific and technological cooperation agreement made between the ‘Universidad Católica de Valparaíso’ (‘Catholic University of Valparaíso’) and the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL International); subscribed with the general purpose of studying the Rapa Nui language and developing educational materials for school education<sup>80</sup>. Rapa Nui people, mostly women, took part of writing workshops (‘Taller de Escritores’<sup>81</sup>) supported by the SIL linguists established in the island; Robert Weber and Nancy Thiesen de Weber.

Amid the wide ranging neo-liberal reforms that were enforced by the military government, with particular emphasis in formal education (Elacqua, Contreras, & Salazar, 2008), new administrations models and study programmes were put in place<sup>82</sup>. In 1984, a new decree applicable only in Easter Island was issued by the Ministry of Public Education (Nº 40). The legal text stated the following:

*“Considering that according to the necessities of the social, economic and cultural environment of the educational population of ‘Isla de Pascua’, and that the educational community has expressed comments, suggestions and aspirations in relation to current plans and programmes of study that apply in the school... It is hereby*

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<sup>80</sup> The research project and collaboration with the Rapa Nui continues until today (Robert Weber and Nancy Thiesen de Weber 2013, personal communication)

<sup>81</sup> These authors included: Huckle, Blanca 1984; Pakarati, Felipe 1984; Tepano, Clementina 1984; Huckle, Leticia 1984; Tuki, Eusebio 1984; Paté, María 1984, Pakomio, Toribio 1984; Tuki, Felipe 1984; Tepano, Flora 1984; Tuki, Hilaria 1985; Chavez, Ana 1984; Haoa, Vicki 1984; Tuki, Benita 1985, Tuki, María Dolores 1985; Hey, Elena 1985; Cardinali; Samuel 1985; among others.

<sup>82</sup> Neoliberal reforms imposed in Chile can be described, in words of Olssen and Peters (2005), as introducing a new form of governance to replace the welfare liberal model; and “limit state power within a negative conception, limiting its role to the protection of individual rights” (p. 315). In the Chilean educational system, it prominently considers the process of ‘municipalisation’ and the push for ‘freedom of education’ (see Elacqua et al., 2008).

*authorized, as of school year 1984, the implementation of the plans and programmes of study approved by Decree N° 4.002 of Education, 1980, as amended .... [and] plans and curricula approved by decree of exemption of Education N° 300 of 1981, as amended, in the specified educational institution”.*

Although the decree recognizes that the ‘educational community’ of the island had manifested their ‘suggestions and aspirations’ regarding the study programmes, it goes on to authorize the application of the decrees that lay down the ‘objectives, plans and programmes of the General Primary Education’, and the curriculum for secondary education (decree N° 4.002/1980 and decree N° 380/1981 respectively). These were to be applied throughout Chile. The decree finishes with the abolishment of the “special education plan... approved by decree No. 991 of 1975... [and its amendments]”<sup>83</sup>.

According to Arredondo (2013), the shift of curricula took place in the island in 1983 (p. 127). In this scenario, to continue teaching Rapa Nui language in the school, the ‘available spaces’ were severely reduced. Nonetheless, Rapa Nui people involved in formal education undertook language teaching in the few available spaces, presumably those considered in the national curriculum for ‘foreign languages’, which allowed four weekly hours. In the account of Delsing (2009) “the teachers started to use the text books for teaching Rapanui as a second language” (p. 328). Learning areas such as art, music and sports were also developed from a local perspective.

Arguably, this development was fuelled by what can be called a ‘Rapa Nui renaissance’ partly fostered by the return of the ‘young professionals’ trained in the mainland, though limited as it was by the impairing political conditions. In these decades several Rapa Nui scholars would perform research that would be widely influential in the island.

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<sup>83</sup> From “Decretos 1.194 - 1.304, Editorial Jurídica de Chile” (p. 282-324)

Hence, despite the change in guidelines, Rapa Nui continued to be taught through the 80's and 90's, developing 'along the way' their own methods and study programmes. The growing consciousness of language loss and the threats that other Polynesian cultures were exposed to elsewhere in the world, played a part of this story as well. As the democratic destitution of Pinochet approached in 1989, a renewed contact with other people of the 'Sea of Islands' would encourage further actions; the first 'intercultural exchanges' with students from Tahiti occurred in 1989 (Arredondo, 2013, p. 131).

In 1990, Virginia Haoa and Pedro Edmunds Paoa travel to the 'Worlds Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education' (WIPCE) in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Delsing, 2009; Haoa, 2013). Māori development of Kōhanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa, and an ongoing 'Māori renaissance' deeply impressed the Rapa Nui delegation that took part of the second WIPCE, and their stories began to circulate on the island. Kōhanga Reo (nursery schools) were built adjacent to the marae, allowing the toddlers to have contact with elders. This resembled Rapa Nui's 'own' learning before the 'formality' of Chilean education (Haoa, 2013). At this conference, Sir Tamati Reedy gave a speech addressing those present in Tūrangawaewae marae: *"Too long we have been brainwashed into believing that our own indigenous languages of the world are not compatible with the modern world. We no longer succumb to the colonization of our minds forcing us to believe that we must give away our indigenous languages in order to be part of our global community. We know that is rubbish and it's time to say it loudly around the world"* (Reedy, 1990)<sup>84</sup>.

The notion that technological developments forced a contradiction between 'tradition and advancement' - where indigenous cultures and languages were expected to 'stay in the past' while the Europeans would lead the

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<sup>84</sup> Archival recording available at: <http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/teahikaa/2010904>.

creation of scientific knowledge - posed a challenging scenario for indigenous peoples of the world. Consequently, the following year a new conference would take place, this time dedicated to the languages and knowledge of the Pacific Islands in “an attempt to halt the threat of extinction of some Polynesian languages, to reverse the decline of others and to bring them successfully into the 21st century. It was this urgency, this concern for the survival of Pacific languages that prompted Professor Timoti Karetu, Māori Language Commissioner, and the Māori Language Commission of New Zealand to invite all Polynesian language groups from Tuvalu and Hawaii to Easter Islands (sic) to attend the Leo Pasifica Conference, held in February 1991, in Hamilton New Zealand. The feelings expressed at the Hamilton conference that indigenous languages of the Pacific ‘are languages with their backs against the wall’ was shared by most delegates, and the three days of discussions and deliberations ended with the setting up of a Polynesian Languages Forum and the Le’o O Maui technical terminology database for Polynesian Languages” (Fenton, 1994, p. 107).

While Rapa Nui did not participate in the latter due to lack of resources, the opportunity to visit Aotearoa, New Zealand in the first place certainly inspired many of the actions taken by the Rapa Nui community from then onwards.

One of such actions was the legal foundation of a local organization; ‘Kahu Kahu o Hera’. As Delsing explains: “A few young schoolteachers (amongst them Rodrigo Paoa, Viki Haoa, David Teao and Hilaria Tuki), and other Rapanui professionals formed this group in 1991, with cultural revitalization as their principal goal. They focused on the recuperation of autochthonous species, the reproduction of traditional games and sports and the defence of the cultural patrimony. Their main point was to denounce that the Chileans, particularly Chilean institutions, are set on culturally assimilating the Rapanui” (2009, p. 312).

Each member of this organization worked on different areas, according to their own specialties. Finding spaces for Rapa Nui language and stories on local radio was an important way of reaching out to the community, contributing to local debate. At the school level, the first 'Department of Rapa Nui Language and Culture' was formed, integrated by the Rapa Nui teachers of the establishment, who started to shape strategies to assess the language issue (Arredondo, 2013, p. 132-135). One of the first struggles they had within school was for the creation of a day to celebrate – exclusively – the local voice. 'Te Mahana o te Reo Rapa Nui' (Day of Rapa Nui Language)<sup>85</sup> was one of many strategies aimed at raising awareness in the community, particularly of parents, about the delicate situation that Rapa Nui language was facing.

In accordance with the increased Rapa Nui participation in municipal and governmental services represented on the island; the upcoming years would see more indigenous people hired by the school as teacher/per hour, introducing their knowledge in the 'Rapa Nui culture' area, while others were hired as 'monitors' to support teachers in their classes. Certain learning areas were increasingly adapted to fit a local perspective, incorporating traditional Rapa Nui knowledge into the school curriculum. Elements of the local culture such as kai-kai; oral stories and Rapa Nui dance and music started replacing the national contents; although limited to learning areas that 'allowed' such flexibility<sup>86</sup>. Following on the Māori experience of Kohanga Reo ('Haka Pupa' in Rapa Nui), Hilaria Pakarati struggled to establish a 'language nest' to receive the younger generations. Unfortunately, poor resourcing and support from local authorities meant this was a short-lived attempt.

In these years, the displacement of Rapa Nui language as a first language in

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<sup>85</sup> The first 'Mahana o te Reo' was held on November 19, 1991 (Arredondo, 2013, 133); and it has been carried out annually since then.

<sup>86</sup> Learning areas such as history, mathematics and Spanish, were considered difficult to adapt without disregarding national expectations.

the younger generation was becoming noticeable. According to research conducted in the school, the percentage of children who grew up with Rapa Nui as their mother tongue fell sharply from 77% in 1977 to 25% in 1989. In 1997, nobody between kindergarten and seventh grade spoke Rapa Nui as a first language and only 7.5% of those attending school were considered bilingual (49 students); while another 12.3% spoke the native language well or regularly (Thiesen & Weber 1998 in Makihara 2005, p. 728). More and more children were growing up without mastering their own language, and as many 'understood but did not speak' Rapa Nui, they were inevitably being left out of interaction spaces with master speakers, usually the elders in the community.

Native language teachers were also starting to face growing difficulties in their work, related to the unavailability of trained teachers and the scarce amount of educational materials developed. School directors held a great deal of authority, and their criterion did not match community demands for Rapa Nui indigenous education. Opposition was felt from local authorities and the majority of mainland teachers and staff that in those days constituted the school (Delsing, 2009; Makihara, 1999). However, not all mainlanders were dubious about indigenous education, and the alliances established between the Rapa Nui teachers and the supportive school staff allowed a marginal space to value the use of language and language teaching.

In the words of one of the leaders in searching spaces for Rapa Nui knowledge; "After attending conferences on Polynesian languages in Tahiti (1992), Hawai'i (1993), and Aotearoa (New Zealand), acquiring new experiences and observing the communities, and then spending time studying abroad in Berlin (1997), I felt that the time had come to present a proposal for a [Rapa Nui] immersion programme as part of the bilingual intercultural education reform that was already being implemented by the Ministry of Education, in 1996" (Haoa 2013, p.2).

In fact, the enactment of the Indigenous Law in 1993 established that “it is the duty of society in general and of the state in particular, through its institutions, the recognition, respect and protection of indigenous cultures and languages.” The law gives the responsibility to the National Indigenous Development Corporation (CONADI<sup>87</sup>), for the development -in areas of ‘high indigenous density’- of Bilingual Intercultural Education (EIB, in Spanish)<sup>88</sup>. This was a way to address the problems generated through formal education, particularly regarding its contribution in the process of language shift from the native languages, to the national language. Three years later, the Ministry of Education<sup>89</sup> issued a decree that allowed establishments with a high indigenous enrolment to develop their own ‘appropriated plans and programmes’<sup>90</sup>. Though this introduced some flexibility in the rigid structure of contents appointed by Dictator Pinochet more than a decade earlier; the Ministry at the time requested a series of ‘minimum contents’ appointed as compulsory for the whole country.

Despite the possibilities arising from Chilean policies, the proposal for immersion in Rapa Nui did not land in fertile ground. Besides the support of the Kahu Kahu o Hera organization, there was no institutional support for Rapa Nui teachers. This did not extinguish the drive of those who believed in the urgency of reclaiming spaces for the Rapa Nui in formal education. In 2000, Kahu Kahu o Hera took on the organization of a new version of the Polynesian Languages Conference ‘at home’. The participatory nature of this endeavour was prominent: in the account of

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<sup>87</sup> Stands for ‘Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena’. Up to date, EIB programs throughout the country are generally funded through CONADI and the Ministry of Education. For details regarding mainland policies in EIB and applications, see for example Montecinos (2004).

<sup>88</sup> Title IV, Paragraph 1, Articles 28 to 31

<sup>89</sup> The Law N° 18.956, in 1990, changed the name of the Chilean Ministry changed ‘Public Education’ to simply ‘Education’; symbolizing the neoliberal reforms that the ‘Chicago Boys’ enforced through the military dictatorship in the Chilean educational system. Hereafter, the ministry will be known as MINEDUC.

<sup>90</sup> Planes y programas propios” (PPP). Decree Law N°40/1996 Mineduc.

Haoa (2013), the Rapa Nui community voluntarily took on the task of translating the conference procedures, and provided food and accommodation for the visitors of the nine Pacific islands that took part of the event. This event allowed a discussion of topics fostering a belief in the possibility for a culturally responsive education.

From these years onwards, new schools would open offering primary and secondary education levels; corresponding with the ‘freedom of education’ policies implemented in Chile since the 80’s. Although Rapa Nui language has regained spaces of value, it continues to fight against the power of the Spanish language daily. The latter still dominates most areas of interaction and is particularly connected to expectations developed in the realm of formal education. Thereby, a major reason that a parent may have (or may have had) to promote Spanish to their children is related to their ‘imagined future’. The exponential growth of tourism, the arrival of foreigners to live on the island and the continued migration of the Rapa Nui to other parts of the world, has fostered a growing appeal in children to learn foreign languages, and a strong and continued interest in revitalising the native tongue (Zurob, 2009, p. 104).

From this historical perspective, I move on towards a contemporary appreciation of the issues considered, from the voices of the participants. Therefore, the next chapter lays out the methodological foundations of this work to inquire about the available spaces that Rapa Nui language and culture has in formal education today.



## Chapter 4. Methodologies of meaning: pathways to knowledge

This chapter outlines the four methodological elements of this research. In particular, the **paradigm**, **theoretical** perspective, **methodology** and **methods** utilised. The first section considers the broad paradigm used to inform the research - *Social constructionism*. The next section discusses the theoretical perspective employed, in this case a *critical* approach. The final sections discuss the methodology and methods. In particular, I argue for the appropriateness of qualitative research within the education field in Rapa Nui. The methods section outlines the process of data gathering (i.e., ethnography, participant observations and interviews) and data analysis techniques that were employed to collect, interpret and review information as well as the various processes used to ensure its overall quality and rigour.

The term ‘research’ can be loosely defined as a systematic inquiry aimed at the creation of new knowledge. Despite this seemingly simple definition; across and within disciplines there are varying perspectives about of the nature of research, and how this relates to the kind of knowledge being developed. When undertaking any investigation, decisions must be made regarding what will be useful to collect relevant information in line with our purposes. Methodology is not only the material aspect of research but also a way of understanding what we do and why we might do it that way. It involves considering the specific reality we approach, how to approach it, and from where we stand to make interpretations of the knowledge it draws forth.

Although Rapa Nui has received a great deal of attention from Western researchers since the beginning of the 20th century, an appalling majority of these inquiries have set out to uncover a ‘mystery’. The monumental archaeological remains on the island have fuelled an image of Rapa Nui as the home of an enigmatic culture, and the knowledge created has placed the constructors of the ‘giant heads’ (Moai statues) as the main topic of

investigation (Metraux, 1936; Routledge, [1919] 1998). In turn, some of these stories would be later codified in a 'archaeological discourse', in which: "Typically, Rapa Nui informant knowledge is classified as useful yet ultimately limited and biased; as something an archaeologist must reorganize in order to extricate the 'real' truth" . However, the truths these studies may have, or may have not discovered have shown to report little benefits for the Rapa Nui, to the extent that they are "dialogical only with the interests of prior Western researchers of Easter Island" (Young, 2012, p. 5-6).

Transferring Linda Smith's statement about Māori to Rapa Nui people; these inquiries have tended to entrap them in a cultural definition, disconnecting them with their oral traditions and their lived realities (1999, p. 170). The problem is that the lived realities of the Rapa Nui continue to be affected by cultural definitions legitimized through research. This reveals that "discourses within the research field form partial fixations of meaning and thereby construct centres that limit the flow of possible interpretations" (Quennerstedt, 2011, p. 663). Therefore, performing research, means acknowledging that the ways we assert definitions and conceptual frameworks will in turn affect the world we study.

In this inquiry, I have approached the lived realities of the participants not to define what their culture and language is, nor to apply conceptual frameworks on their stories or to decide what should, or what should not be considered in a local curriculum. That is not my place. My interest has been in acknowledging the perspective of educators in Rapa Nui of the issues that are currently pressing on their work, and the possibilities they foresee in the education of Rapa Nui language and culture in a school setting.

The educational context of Rapa Nui has a marginal space in contemporary academic debate. Previous attempts in the field have defined formal education in the island as a 'problem', generated by the difficulties of

communication between Rapa Nui students with their Chilean teachers in the classroom (González Nualart, 1984, p. 86). Recasens has understood this 'problem' as a consequence of the process of 'incipient bilingualism' (1982, p. 3) further sustained in a 'torn cultural identity' as a result of the 'cultural rupture' suffered by the Rapa Nui 'before the arrival of Europeans'. In the perspective of Alarcón and Llaña (1998) there would be an 'incompatibility between the interactional systems studied', namely, the school teachers, the students and the Rapa Nui community of parents. They base their 'diagnostic' of the compatibility between the 'school system and the family system in Easter Island' on the following conclusions: the lack of knowledge of the teachers (and teaching materials) regarding the educational reality of the island and their low social prestige in the community context. They also discuss 'psychosocial factors' for students such as their lack of self-esteem and the dissociation between aspirations and the strategies to achieve them. And finally, with the critical view that parents hold of teachers, their low average in (formal) educational levels; and the lack of parental support in school's activities (p. 101-102).

These accounts place the 'problem' in a deficit of the actors involved, while falling short on positive outlooks regarding the educational role of local knowledge. They enable deficit theorizing of the 'educational issue', regarding Rapa Nui language and culture as an obstacle in pursuing academic success.

Considering the limited relevance of these studies in the current context, this thesis undertook an exploratory approach aimed at providing a plausible platform for further inquiries of a subject that has been invisibilized in academic spaces. My search for truth points toward placing the knowledge that the participants shared with me, regarding the spaces that Rapa Nui knowledge occupies in their educational roles, as central.

I have acknowledged my position as a non-indigenous researcher throughout the process, as there is a need to respond to the unhelpful divide between indigenous communities and non-indigenous researchers from the Academy (G. H. Smith, 2003). As I have lived on Rapa Nui for a number of years and participated in aspects of Rapa Nui culture, I am in a unique position; yet it is crucial that I am reflexive in my approach.

My position in this research is problematic. I was raised in the capital of Chile, a 'developing country' that is both colonized, and the colonizer from the perspective of Rapa Nui. I write as a Chilean, as a woman, as a Third World scholar, as an anthropologist. I identify with all these labels, but none of them are enough to account for my experience. I have also lived in Rapa Nui for several years, which has led me to engage with the island's people, their stories and become critical of the assumptions that tend to classify, categorize and disregard people and their identity. This research arises from a critical awareness of the inequalities imposed by the colonial discourse (L. T. Smith, 1999) and my search for a dialogue with the participants. This study also incorporates critical theory, in the belief that in the context of indigenous education in Rapa Nui, the power and hegemony of colonizing ideals within education must be challenged.

In the next section, I start with a discussion of the paradigms that give shape to this particular inquiry. I then discuss the importance of incorporating decolonization theory within research involving intercultural settings, the relevance of Kaupapa Māori research, and the appropriateness of using a qualitative approach in this particular study. Finally, I present the specific methods utilised, in order to depict how the research process unfolded.

### **Paradigms and places of knowledge: Discovering truth as a construct**

*"As we are to deal with meaning, let us begin with a paradigm"*  
(Geertz, 1973, p. 89).

In his seminal book 'The Structure of Scientific Revolutions', Kuhn ([1962] 2012) promoted the word 'paradigm' to distinguish the set of beliefs, rules and practices that constitute a worldview. Paradigms exist to help guide how decisions are made with regards to the research process. For this particular thesis, a social constructionist paradigm has provided a useful set of beliefs, rules and practices which align with the overall objectives of this research.

Kuhn's ideas on paradigms have been adopted in many disciplines and in popular culture (Donmoyer, 2006) and he is widely quoted to explain the shift of paradigms (as a 'scientific revolution'). His original idea was that shifts "occur intermittently in physical science disciplines [and] involve replacing one way of thinking about knowledge and research (and also the world the researcher is studying) with another incommensurable view" (p. 12). The perfect Copernican turn.

Kuhn's work came in a broader context of questioning the place and goal of science, and rationality and objectivity as plausible indicators of truth; a process that has been developing further recently (i.e., L. T. Smith, 1999). In literature we find the notion of 'post-positivism' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Lather, 1992) as a break with past paradigms based on a naïve realism. Positivism "refers to Comte's (1798-1857) efforts to extend scientific methods to the study of society" (Lather, 1992, p.89); and it relies ontologically on the assumption of an objective reality that can be apprehended by the human mind (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 98). This was furthered by Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), who is still considered as one of the main architects of modern sociology. In his attempt to introduce sociology as a legitimate science, he insisted that social sciences could retain the same objectivity, rationalism, and approach to causality as believed by the empiricist and normative research traditions. This stance came to be known as epistemological realism, where inquiry is aimed to discover and describe the laws that govern reality; assuming 'the power to define'. This idea was

confronted, following the shift within human sciences from a behaviourist idea of the individual to a new paradigm that is known - primarily in psychology- as 'cognitivism'. The assumption here is that actions are sustained by *meanings*, which are developed in the course of social interaction.

Lyotard famously described post-modernism as incredulity towards meta-narratives (1984), by these referring to the promise of rationality, progress and other modern endeavours. While "moving out of the cultural values spawned by the Age of Reason, the scientific revolution of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the Enlightenment and its material base, the Industrial revolution" (Lather 1992, p.88); we are also confronted by the realities of those grand discourses of Modernity and the power imbalances they sustain. As L. Smith asserts, "Rationality in the Western tradition enabled knowledge to be produced and articulated in a scientific and 'superior' way" (1999, p.170). Science became largely considered the only way to search for truth, a search that was guaranteed by the reasoning capacity of the 'modern man', but "the emancipatory potential of science (...) was rather quickly reduced to its method" (Lather, 1992, p.88).

The 'scientific method' promoted by Descartes, has been widely influential in the realities of education today; while the 'positivist' assumptions are at the base of quantitative approaches that continue to be popular among researchers in education (Poplin, 1987; Shavelson & Towne, 2002). However, after what Habermas (1975) called the 'legitimation crisis' in cultural authority, the old paradigm has been challenged by new orientations in research, each of them holding subtle differences, yet "united by the common rejection of the belief that human behaviour is governed by general, universal laws and characterized by underlying regularities" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Lather (1992), will say: "Positivism is not dead. (...) What is dead, however, is its theoretic dominance" (p.90).

The possibility of 'absolute truth' is denied in favour of 'reality' as individually and collectively constructed by those who participate in it. This ontological and epistemological assumption posits a 'social construction of reality' (Berger & Luckmann, 1976), a meta-paradigm that harbours most of the research conducted today in the human sciences. It is through the daily interactions between people in the course of social life that our versions of knowledge become fabricated. In a constructivist paradigm, validity is a social construct of consensual understanding. Truth is not separate from people. It is rather constructed and reproduced in our everyday interactions and how we speak about the world. Therefore social interaction of all kinds, and particularly language, is of great interest to social constructionists. As (Burr, 2003) states, the goings-on between people in the course of their everyday lives are seen as the practices during which our shared versions of knowledge are constructed (p. 4). Interpretation becomes a necessary part of research, to the extent that it constitutes social reality and therefore, it is the only way of making human action intelligible (Velasco & Díaz de Rada, 1997, p. 72).

Following on from the move away from an objective reality governed by universal laws, new spaces opened up in the research arena. The appearance of new 'voices' in the research community, such as the feminist, critical race, indigenous, postcolonial and decolonizing theorists challenged the positivist claim of truth and the profusion of a patriarchal, heterosexual, ethnocentric and colonial discourse embedded in academic research (L. T. Smith, 1999). The growing complexity of the research field is particularly important, not only because it allows new narratives to be considered in the academic world, but also because it echoes the complexity of human experiences; generating discourses that operate in multiple layers and respond to different ideas regarding the nature of truth.

*"It is a time of demystification, of critical discourses that disrupt the smooth passage of what Foucault (1980) calls 'regimes of truth'. This is*

*not to substitute an alternative and more secure foundation, what Harding (1986) terms a 'successor regime', but to produce an awareness of the complexity, historical contingency, and fragility of the practices we invent to discover the truth about ourselves" (Lather, 1992, p. 88).*

For a study such as this one, the stories created and the social phenomena approached are considered as 'texts'. The significance of these texts is given, in first instance, by the interpretation each participant of the research (and the researcher) operates through the act of remembering and forgetting, and where the temporal and biographical dimension occupies a central position (Gorlier, 2005). The narrative inquiry emphasises the notion of 'truth' as a social construction, and one which allows for the possibility of multiple 'truths' and interpretations (Bishop, 1996, p. 3).

*"Narrative knowledge does not give priority to the question of its own legitimation and that it certifies itself in the pragmatics of its own transmission without having recourse to argumentation and proof. (...) The scientist questions the validity of narrative statements and concludes that they are never subject to argumentation or proof. He classifies then as belonging to a different mentality: savage, primitive, underdeveloped, backward, alienated, composed of opinions, customs, authority, prejudice, ignorance and ideology. Narratives are fable, myths, legends, fit only for women and children" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 27).*

### **The extension of knowledge and power through decolonizing research**

To position ourselves as researchers requires a certain awareness of the history that shapes the activity of knowledge production in our times. Linda Smith asserts; history is *mostly* about power (1999, p. 34). In a similar sense, stories convey the power of authors. A critical stance toward research carried out through alienating methodologies stems from the experiences of



indigenous peoples: “while this type of research was validated by the ‘scientific method’ and ‘colonial affirmation’, it did little to extend the knowledge of Māori people. Instead, it left a foundation of ideologically laden data about Māori society, which has distorted notions of what it means to be Māori” (1999, p. 170).

The question of whose knowledge is being extended by research has received more attention in the past decades, connecting validity and quality criteria to the development of ethical standards. While positivists claim an unobtrusive researcher will apprehend more authentic behaviour, the less he/she gets involved in the field; constructivist researchers recognize that no research is neutral and no researcher is unbiased. Furthermore, “To deny the importance of subjectivity in the process of transforming the world and history is naïve and simplistic. It is to admit the impossible: a world without men. This objectivist position is as ingenuous as that of subjectivism, which postulates men without a world. World and men do not exist apart from each other, they exist in constant interaction” (Freire, 1972, p. 27).

Therefore, critical theory will further the claim for an “advocacy approach” that is both aware and committed (Lather 1992).

These discussions have nurtured an important development in research ethics in the past decades; the emergence of committees, particularly in universities and other research centres, to set standards or basic ethical guidelines for research performance. Ethical guidelines promote transparent and mutually respectful relationships in research, thus relating to trustworthiness, moving beyond coherence criteria in a given tradition, and emphasizing the importance of connecting research goals to the particular socio-cultural scenario it purports to address. Lincoln (1995) proposes the community as arbiter of quality, something that Cohen et al. consider as “catalytic validity” (2007, p.139), where they relate the purpose of an inquiry to ‘serve the purposes of the community in which it was carried out’ (Lincoln 1995, p.280). These developments and shifts look

toward a new form of scholarship and research; that reduces power imbalances rather than building upon them, after recognizing the harm this has caused in the past.

The move towards participative methodologies and action research is also based on a recognition of the nature of knowledge creation and of “the way[s] we humans live in society, learning everything we know through others” (Brydon-Miller, Shafer, & Greenwood, 2006, p. 83). They “regard knowledge as an agent of social transformation as a whole.” These paradigms of research give privileged space to practical knowledge attempting to reduce the gap between theory and practice, and reject the fiction of the researcher as an ‘expert’ that ‘creates knowledge’ from ‘raw stuff’ of his/her field (Brydon-Miller et al., 2006, p. 83).

Critical theory goes further and strives to contribute to social transformation and emancipation from unequal power structures constructed in specific historical settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 99) Lincoln et. al 2011, p.99). For critical theorists, “knowledge is an attempt to emancipate the oppressed and improve human conditions” (Fay in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 114), so research will be judged on its capacity to induce positive social change and emancipatory community action. This could be also applied to participatory research in its search for social transformation, but observed through the relationship between the researcher and the participants.

The present research has benefitted from methodological orientations springing from a participatory approach. From the broader perspective, however, the theoretical foundations of my research are rooted in critical theory. Critical research looks to unsettle hegemony and critique how social realities may inhibit human well-being and increase human suffering (Fairclough, 2012, p. 10). Hegemony is the maintenance of domination of the dominant classes over subordinate classes through consensual social

practices, forms and structures (McLaren, 2009). While dominance may seem fixed, it is understood that hegemony is only ever partial and temporary, it points out the political, economic and ideological struggles that result in dominance or subordination (Fairclough, 2012, p. 2).

Of particular interest for this thesis, has been the Kaupapa Māori knowledge tradition. Graham Smith's (1997) seminal doctorate entitled 'The Development of Kaupapa Māori: Theory and Praxis' initially identified six principles or elements of Kaupapa Māori that were evident within the context of education (specifically Kura Kaupapa Māori) and research. These elements and principles have since been expanded by other Kaupapa Māori theorists such as Smith (1999) and Pihama, Cram, and Walker (2002). The Kaupapa Māori intervention principles can be broadly described as a 'theory of transformative praxis' (G. H. Smith, 1997) or the practice and realisation of Kaupapa Māori. I understand that the Kaupapa Māori approach is challenging the dominance of a paradigm that has allowed research to primarily benefit the researcher (Bishop, 1996, p. 15).

This learning through Kaupapa Māori has contributed to my own search in several ways. I see Kaupapa Māori principles as unique to the Māori worldview; however they offer an excellent example of a critical perspective for research that has been realised by indigenous intellectuals. I have found strong similarities between the concerns of Kaupapa Māori research and the concerns of the Rapa Nui people regarding the benefits of research, and culturally responsive ways of doing so.

During the work I carried out for my undergraduate thesis in Rapa Nui, I was once questioned by a Rapa Nui woman. She asked me what I was doing. When I told her I was doing research on family education, she said: "And when is the *umu*<sup>91</sup> for all of us to go and eat?" At first, I thought she was confused; but then quickly realized she meant 'how/what are we going to

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<sup>91</sup> 'Umu' in Rapa Nui, corresponds to 'hāngī' in Māori ; and 'earth oven' in English.

benefit from your work?’ This question became a guiding one, and the Rapa Nui woman, Pamela, became my friend.

Although the distinction between the two cultural traditions must be taken into account, Kaupapa Māori proves relevant in this context considering the shared background of both Māori and Rapa Nui knowledge traditions. The Tino Rangatiratanga principle can be regarded as the main underlying theme of Kaupapa Māori. This can be explained as ‘Māori control over Māori things’, or simply ‘Māori for Māori’ (Pihama et al., 2002). This principle was embedded in 1840 in the document that founded Aotearoa, New Zealand as a country, Te Tiriti O Waitangi. This principle is also present in the Rapa Nui struggle for self-determination (Gomez, 2010). It can be said that the “Agreement of Wills’ of 1888 also established a foundation for power-sharing between Chile and Rapa Nui. However, this agreement has yet to be endorsed by the Chilean nation-state (see chapter 2). In my position as ‘non-Rapa Nui’ in this context; I acknowledge the right for self determination of the Rapa Nui, and position myself in this research as an equal (though not ‘alike’). My research stems from acknowledging my responsibility as the counterpart of the 1888 ‘Deed of Cession’. Using Bishop’s words (1996) ‘to leave it all’ to Rapa Nui people is to ‘abrogate’ my responsibilities as a ‘Treaty partner’. The pursuit of social justice is a task all must be engaged in (p. 18).

On another level the concept of ‘whakawhānaungatanga’, defined by Bishop (1996) as the process of establishing relationships in a Māori context, has also been of great interest, particularly in relation to the researcher’s connectedness, engagement and involvement with others in order to promote self-determination, agency and voice (Bishop & Glynn, 1999, p. 174). Though I use the concept marginally in my thesis, it has allowed me to ‘name’ the process of building a ‘research team’; as constituted by the participants and myself. It has also provided a useful framework to think about my own process of establishing relationships within the Rapa Nui

community. In my undergraduate thesis (2009), I learned a great deal about the Rapa Nui ways of 'making family'. I attempted a description of how children were 'raised' through a shared responsibility of upbringing in the extended family. My use of the term is a useful analogy for my own reflections. However, by no means do I imply that these 'metaphoric families' are founded on kinship, rather I stress the possibility of this inquiry being meaningful for both parties (researcher and participants) and relies on my long-term commitment and active engagement with the island's people.

Conducting culturally responsive research with indigenous people within a westernised institution was a challenging task. The present research was framed in a Master's programme for Waikato University, which in turn comprises of a set of definitions of what knowledge is, and how we measure it. It is done in academic English, while it speaks of meanings that are constructed in other languages. Acknowledging that I am co-creating this knowledge to obtain an academic degree, it also implies a history of power relationships 'between and across' knowledge traditions; in which universities place themselves as a legitimate judge of who is, and who isn't qualified for a certain task. To assume my responsibility as a researcher in this context, I have continuously endeavoured to place my practices and assumptions "under scrutiny, acknowledging the ethical dilemmas that permeate the research process and impinge on the creation of knowledge" (McGraw, Zvonkovic, & Walker, 2000, p. 68). Hereafter is a description of the specific methodologies and methods used to engage with participants.

### **From Methodology to Methods: the appropriateness of qualitative research**

One of the possible contributions of positivism to social research is the development of quantitative methods. These methods essentially draw on the 'measurability' of all entities, and they have fuelled the implementation

of large-scale studies and interventions (i.e., public policies). The quantitative approach to research is largely a deductive enterprise, and it is particularly useful when we wish to prove the observability of a theory and its relation to set variables. However, it carries limits (and dangers), drawing upon epistemological assumptions similar to those of positivism, conceiving human acts as a function that regularly connects certain inputs or stimuli with certain outputs or reactions” (Gutiérrez & Delgado, 1999, p. 143).

Some authors consider that this paradigm shift in research is expressed in the move from quantitative methods to qualitative methods, where the “rationales used to justify certain qualitative approaches reveals thinking that is, indeed, incommensurable with the thinking that traditionally had shaped research in the education field” (Donmoyer, 2006, p. 17). Although these new conceptualizations of the individual have had a great impact on research, I would agree with Lather when she writes “Qualitative is ‘the other’ to quantitative and, hence, it is a discourse at the level of *method*, not *methodology* or *paradigm*” (emphasis in original, 1992, p.90).

This research was carried out as a case study of one primary school of Rapa Nui and its relationships with the community. The purpose was to highlight the experience of an educational community (understood here as a whanau of interest); focusing on the perceptions, expectations and ideas that underlie and give significance to the participants’ practice as indigenous educators. The research process has been designed from a qualitative perspective, which appealing to the ‘unquantifiable’ introduces a new understanding of the old ‘object of study’. It allows for a relationship of subject to subject in interaction, which ultimately forms the basis of this shared construction of knowledge.

## Research methods

Hereafter, I will describe the methods I have relied on during my research process. Although they do not correspond in a perfectly chronological order - since some steps overlap and occur simultaneously - they nonetheless provide a fair estimation of the steps that have shaped the methodological approach of this investigation. To achieve the ultimate aims of this thesis, three interrelated methodological approaches were utilised: ethnography, participant observation and interviews. Each of these will be described, to finally conclude this chapter with a presentation of the approach I assumed toward 'data', and the further analysis of findings.

### Ethnography

*To study the behaviour and mentality without the subjective desire of feeling by what these people live, of realising the substance of their happiness is, in my opinion, to miss the greatest reward which we can hope to obtain from the study of man (Malinowski, [1922] 1993 p. 25).*

Since the days of Malinowski, considered 'the father of ethnography', the situation has changed considerably: ethnography is not about being isolated in the middle of the Pacific with 'half-naked' men and women who do not understand our language, let alone our intentions. The perfect stranger that arrives to a rather isolated and 'exotic' community, that goes 'in' and 'out' of the culture undertaking study before laying out his/her results, is no longer an arguable position. This reinterpretation of the 'subject to object' relationship is critical for this research. The shift in the understanding of the 'object of study' has allowed anthropologists (and other Western researchers) to lose their imaginary throne, and learn their most valuable lesson. In words of Velasco and Díaz de Rada (1997), for anthropologists, the human groups they study become their teacher (p. 72). Thus, ethnography can be symbolized as a bridge, significantly oriented to enable dialogue between different knowledge systems (p. 42).

Under this premise, I consider ethnography as the overall methodological process that encompasses the specific techniques I chose for the development of this research. This was made possible by the New Zealand Development scholarship (NZDS), from the Aid programme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZAID/MFAT); which funded my travel costs to Rapa Nui for three months between July and October of 2013. Although the 'field' is the place I called home before arriving to Aotearoa, New Zealand, this time I entered Rapa Nui observing 'everyday life' as if it were strange customs of an exotic world. This analogy must be understood solely as a strategy to enhance my own critical awareness of known spaces; to question what is regarded as 'common sense' and open myself to new possibilities of thinking and interpreting the particular situation I wanted to approach.

Before arriving in Rapa Nui, I conducted a comprehensive review of literature regarding curriculum development in, for and by indigenous communities. I also did an extensive revision of current policy frameworks that Rapa Nui schools are expected to follow. These reviews of the literature, however, left me with further doubts regarding the spaces available for Rapa Nui knowledge in school curricula. Given the exploratory aim of this thesis, this stage had the substantial role of placing my research interest in a historical perspective. It also gave me a broad idea of the normative space that public policies on education create for teachers, school staff and parents in curriculum development. However, the main findings of this inquiry were obtained through the rich experience of the participants; which would ultimately bring me back to my literature review from a different perspective. In Rapa Nui, two main methods were used to obtain 'first hand information': participant observation (PO) and in depth interviews as 'chat' (Bishop, 1996, p. 31). These two methods are now discussed.



## Participant Observation

Participant observation can be defined as the process which enables ‘researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in a natural setting, through observing and participating in those activities’ (Kawulich, 2005, p. 2). This technique places the researcher as the main instrument of study, so that information will arise through interaction with others (Menter, Elliot, Hulme, & Lewin, 2011, p. 168).

By participating within and observing relevant situations, I entered the ‘public space’ of culture, which I distinguished as internally diverse; articulating multiple perspectives in interaction. Participant observation is a useful way of commencing ethnographic journeys. It can help identify the spaces that will be relevant according to our interest, and guide the research to what seems to be relevant in the observed space (Menter et al., 2011, p. 167). Participating within local activities does not enable myself to ‘become one of them’, or assume that I am therefore able to determine objectively the value they give to their actions. Rather, it provided me with the opportunity to participate and engage with ‘the world’ I approached. Deep and meaningful involvement with the participants allowed the development of “thick descriptions”<sup>92</sup> of observations (Geertz, 1973) and gave fluency to data collecting methods. Through the continued process of questioning what and how I understood the investigation, participant observation provided the relevant threads which tie the data together, giving rigour to the knowledge created.

PO was applied continually throughout the research process. Such an approach conjures up doubt and questions, which provide clues about what to ask and how. PO relies heavily on the researcher’s insights. I, as the

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<sup>92</sup> Thick description appeals to be a dense description of small-scale events or situations, through which we will be able to understand not only what is happening, but also wider interpretations of the cultural context in which the situation takes place. First introduced by Gilbert Ryle, Clifford Geertz will use this concept for ethnographical work.

research instrument, reflected upon the issues or questions that were raised through the interaction with the participants. These moments of reflexivity constitute sources of questions that will later on guide new observations (Delamont, 2009; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

Although I was a participant observer during different school activities, one of the main settings for the use of PO was the research workshop I held with the research participants. Along with the invitation to participate in the research, I extended an invitation for participants to take part in a workshop on collaborative research methodologies<sup>93</sup>. This activity was offered as a *koha* (a gift) - drawing on Kaupapa Māori research methods - and it was developed in accordance with the interests, desires and conditions set out by the participants. I did take some notes on the discussions that were held that day, but these were recorded after the event. In this case, it was important to ensure the participants that I was not doing this workshop to put them 'under the microscope', but rather to take part in a group conversation. The goal here - as I expressed in my invitation - was to foster a discussion with participants on the expectations and perspectives they held regarding the education of indigenous students. I also wanted to share some of the knowledge I had learnt during my studies in Aotearoa, New Zealand into indigenous research methodologies. Finally, it was also an attempt to integrate the notion of participatory consciousness (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003); as it gave me the chance to discuss the goals of this particular research with those involved, listen to their recommendations and perspectives, and therefore discuss the knowledge that this thesis wished to produce, and for what purpose.

### **In depth interviews as 'chat'**

In depth interviews provided the main data collection technique. These were conducted in accordance with Bishop's use of Haig Brown's notion of

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<sup>93</sup> See Appendix B.

‘interviews as chat’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 31); where they are understood as conversations, which can be both formal or informal, but where the emphasis is on the creation of collaborative narratives of the issues discussed. I already knew most of the participants, mainly through the work I have done previously on the island, where positive relationships had been developed. Even those who I didn’t know, they knew who I was as they had ‘seen me around’ for a number of years. This allowed a ‘recognition of each other’ that made the building of rapport an easier process, thus opening up the space for interviews as a reciprocal conversation. I asked a set of questions that had been previously shown to the participants<sup>94</sup>; and they could ‘ask back’ as they wished. Interviews opened me up to the space of discourse, establishing the bridge toward the ways that people interpret their actions; thus resulting in accounts of meaningful experience (Alonso, 1999, p. 226).

Participants were asked to give a recorded interview before and one after the research workshop was held. They were notified that the interviews would last between 30 to 45 minutes, and that they would take place at a date, time and location that were suitable to them, within the time constraints of the research itself. At a later stage, the interview data was transcribed and transcriptions returned to participants so they could introduce changes in their discourse. The purpose of this was to enable further negotiations and the co-construction of meaning with the participants (Bishop & Glynn, 1999, p. 114).

The choice of the specific techniques I used in this research, involved a careful look at the context in which we are located and the goals we pursue. In some cases PO is not sufficient to underpin a certain issue, while in others it will be the only way to participate in a collective experience. One-on-one interviews might give deep insight on certain issues but it does not provide an adequate perception about how the group would interact

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<sup>94</sup> See Appendix C.

together. The use of different methods is what ultimately allows triangulation, as a way to pinpoint the concepts developed from a reflexive approach to observation and then discard them if necessary. We can also attempt to triangulate data gathered by different observers, to prove our own perception is trustworthy and not impressionistic. Triangulation is a powerful way of demonstrating concurrent validity, particularly in qualitative research (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 141).

### **Entering a school: recruitment of participants, flexibility and reflexivity**

The research was conducted from a positive, strength-based approach. However, because this research sits within a very small community, I have taken all possible safeguards to make sure that the findings would not harm their relationship with local or national authorities. I ensured them that no one would be identified in the thesis, and also that minimal context information would be provided to avoid breaching of anonymity.

Even though I understand what the final goal of anonymity and confidentiality is, I have to admit that these ethical imperatives made me reflect critically on their final effect. It is somehow strange that while I am committed to emphasizing the participants' voices in the thesis, at the same time I am obliged to do so in a 'covert' way. Although this is a thesis about local agency and the power of the community to assert an indigenous education programme, I regard them in this work as people 'with no name'. This has made me reflect deeply on the contradictions that are innate in academic work and on possible ways to overcome these. The participants of this research are experts on indigenous education, thus I believe we must find ways of acknowledging this expertise and giving them true and legitimate space within the academy. A notion that is well supported and advocated by many indigenous researchers (see for example Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; L. T. Smith, 1999). Confidentiality is a 'double-edged sword'. While maintaining anonymity, we are at the same

time protecting and silencing the voices we wish to hear, interpret and communicate to others. Participants become an abstract figure, where their participation in indigenous education holds them together as a ‘whānau of interest’ (Bishop & Glynn, 1999, p. 65); whose story I attempt here to reconstruct.

Nonetheless, all possible ethical safeguards have been observed throughout the process. The Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee approved this project in 2013 and informed consent from all relevant parties was sought before starting data collection<sup>95</sup>. I understand “the essence of informed consent is that people should be allowed to agree or refuse to participate in the light of comprehensive information concerning the nature and purpose of the research” (Homan, 1991 in Kemp, 2001, p. 531). This was made possible through written letters containing all relevant information, and oral explanations of these to all participants. Oral accounts appeared to be culturally preferred in the context, which is consistent with the ‘*kanohi ki te kanohi*’ interactions preferred in the Kaupapa Māori research framework.

Finally - and despite my contradictions - the adherence to specific ethical guidelines and the exposure of these to the people involved in the research, was a way to guarantee their rights as participants were being considered. This turned out to be helpful in the creation of trust between the researcher and the participants, an aspect that can be heavily influential in the trustworthiness of the data.

According to my interest in indigenous education, I was interested in working with a school that could show experience in the subject. Therefore, the school was selected upon the following criteria: a) longest history in the application of indigenous education programmes within the school, b) highest percentage of Rapa Nui teachers and/or staff, and c) highest percentage of Rapa Nui students.

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<sup>95</sup> See Appendix D.

Once I arrived in Rapa Nui I went to the chosen school to meet the principal, carrying with me a letter of invitation<sup>96</sup>. This letter had all the relevant information attached, explaining the research interests and what was expected from the school for this purpose. At our meeting, the school principal showed immediate interest in participating in this project. He asked me to present my research to the local municipal authority and assured me that, if I obtained consent from them, he would willingly give consent to involve the school in the study. I then prepared a letter and consent form to present at the municipal level, and presented myself at the appropriate office. The authority was pleased to give consent for such an inquiry.

Once initial consent was gained from the school, the recruitment of other participants followed. I used a 'snowball sampling' technique (Noy, 2008), in which research participants are asked to assist researchers in identifying other potential subjects. As this thesis is about local agency in the development of the indigenous education programme, this was considered an appropriate sampling technique; particularly because it relies on the participant's knowledge rather than on the researchers' criteria alone. Moreover, the involvement of parents, teachers or staff in this indigenous education was not easy to identify by solely considering the formal role they had in the school institution.

Initially, the principal of the participant school lead me to contact a member of the school staff who had an active role in curriculum development and integration of indigenous knowledge in the school's curriculum. After gaining consent from this second participant, I was advised to contact those teachers that had been involved in this work as well. From these in turn, I got the names of those parents who had been involved with the school's work, particularly advocates of integrating Rapa Nui knowledge in local curriculum.

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<sup>96</sup> See Appendix A.

Finally, I had obtained consent from nine participants, including teachers, school staff members and parents. These participants strongly encouraged me to include some community members that had been instrumental in the development of the indigenous education programme, so I sought approval from the corresponding Ethics Committee to include these new informants. Finally, a group of twelve participated in the study. All twelve participants received the correspondent letter of invitation to be a part of the research, as well as the appropriate attachments with further information and consent forms<sup>97</sup>. They all agreed to be interviewed, and nine of them attended the aforementioned research workshop. Those who attended the research workshop also had a follow up interview to reassess what the research workshop meant for him/her as a participant and further reflect on the possibilities of improving school curriculum through collaborative research. While the interviews answered my research questions, and therefore are mainly presented in the results chapter (chapter 5); the research workshop had a guiding role in the analysis of these results, and the writing of the discussion (chapter 6).

All in all, the methodological design initially proposed for this thesis was successfully covered. However, throughout the entire research process I noted possible adjustments that would make these methods more appropriate for the cultural and social setting I was in. Commonly, the objectives that I had prepared 'from my desk' were affected by various circumstances. Although my previous plan did not suffer major changes, slight alterations of my initial perspective were considered to keep my research contextually significant.

Finally, to ensure high quality research is not only to be able to confirm the existence of 'valid' data (i.e through data saturation, thick description or triangulation of methods). It is to do so in a given placement, where our own position as researchers must be revealed to the ones we work with and

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<sup>97</sup> See Appendices B, C and D.

to those who will be later the ‘crowd’ of our production. Quality in research must be obtained through this acknowledgement, that essentially places the researcher and the ‘researched’ in a common ethical ground, recognizing that research purposes are not neutral (Menter et al., 2011, p. 47).

### **Collaborative Story-telling**

*To understand something human, personal or collective, it is necessary to tell a story (José Ortega & Gasset, 1925).*

‘Reality’ is always overwhelming when we try to narrow it down to our simplistic research goals. It is through the ongoing interpretation of findings, that it becomes possible to delve deeper into issues that are of significance to the participants. However, it is at the end of the ethnographic process that the analysis of all the collected data can be confronted. Once the interviews were transcribed and approved by the corresponding authors, we encounter what Huberman called ‘the intrinsic dilemma of social science research’. People’s narratives of their own lives and experiences are so rich, multiple and unique, that we are under the impression that we deteriorate them from the moment we place our descriptive and analytical hands on them (1998, p. 225).

The process of coding and analysis of my notes was continued through the research process, but finally worked through at the final stage of the research. The use of qualitative data analysis software<sup>98</sup> was helpful to connect all the different sources of information and be as exhaustive as possible in their revision. The idea was to learn from my insights, and instead of collecting a wider range of information, attaining a deeper and richer understanding of the issues I was focusing on. All three of the data collection techniques described in this chapter produced different forms of qualitative information that I later attempted to ‘thread’ together to tell a story. The story of the participants; this ‘whānau of interest’ I had the

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<sup>98</sup> MAXQDA Version 11 (Release 11.0.5)



pleasure of working with.

As mentioned, I approached my findings as the results of a narrative inquiry and from there attempted to put the participant's stories as central. This is how the following chapter took shape. I wanted to answer my research questions in the form of a collaborative story (Bishop, 1996, p. 33). The idea of placing myself as a narrator/commentator of events did not suit my goal to place the expert knowledge of the participants in a privileged space. This process, turned out to be challenging, however rewarding as soon as I could see the participant's voices coming together in a multiple, diverse, and even contradictory story at times. There are some formal aspects I shall clarify here.

In the first place, I have opted to avoid placing the participants' voice in terms of a "quote" in the text. The common format where a quote is typically separated from the main text, given a different format; and later commented or analysed through the 'narrative voice' did not comply with my interests. I was trying to tell a story, the story told to me by participants; not to dissect their words into lost bits of information. Their stories could only make sense as what they were. I decided to use the participants' voices as the main text; as the narrator. I also decided I would not associate the participants with any 'labels' that could help distinguish from each other (such as gender, age, role in school, ethnicity, etc.). This was primarily to avoid any threats to anonymity. Although my voice is sporadically intertwined with their stories, in Chapter 5 the main protagonists were the participants.

The different voices that compose the story are distinguished by the use of "quotation marks." Each time there is a change of marks; it denotes a different voice, that is, a different person. I have tried to intervene with the quotes as little as possible, only inserting some words between [brackets]. It must be considered that all these voices were originally in Spanish or Rapa

Nui language. I have translated these quotes, paying attention to the meaning that each word or phrase attempts to deliver. In this sense, in my translation I have focused not so much in doing this 'literally'; but rather emphasizing the significance of the text. Wherever possible, I keep the first person (I) in their quotes as long as it doesn't imply placing themselves in ways that could threaten anonymity.

I have taken special care in reporting the participant's perspectives with a positive tone. However, one of the challenges encountered while trying to develop a 'collaborative' perspective was the existence of contradictions and difference in testimonies. I have tried not to avoid contradiction but rather allow space for a multifaceted account of events. Chapter 6, on the other hand, poses a relatively 'simplified' view of the issues that arise in the participants' story.

Finally upon completion of the research and examination of the thesis, I am committed to returning to the participating school to share the findings of the research. From there, and with them; it can be decided if any future actions will be taken to disseminate the thesis results; as determined appropriate by the participants.

## Chapter 5. Stories of Indigenous Education in a school

The stories presented articulate the story of a group of people – from different places – who have been brought into indigenous education, understood as a concept that transcends this particular case study. Their motivations for working in the school's effort to involve Rapa Nui language and knowledge in education relate in different ways to the stories discussed and we must maintain a flexible view of time as we go through the participants' memories and perspectives of the integration of Rapa Nui knowledge into curriculum.

The first section aims to introduce the voices of this case study. These voices will serve to help provide a construction of the history of the whānau. I begin with the school, as the thesis is focused on answering how it has been possible to incorporate Rapa Nui indigenous knowledge into a school setting. Perspectives on the participation of parents and local entities in this process will be presented in the stories, increasingly focused on the dialogue that the school has established with the community.

It is important to clarify that in the colloquial language of face-to-face interactions, the terms used to denote indigenous knowledge education might sound vague and imprecise, due to the language economy that spoken dialogue can allow. As a general rule, in the translation of these 'moments of speech', EIB is used when the person is referring to the Chilean policies of interculturalism. Immersion programme or immersion, when the person refers to the school's curricular development and (or) the classes carried out in Rapa Nui language. Indigenous education programme, refers to the schools' curricular development and (or) the classes carried out in culturally responsive ways, either in Rapa Nui or Spanish language. Finally, indigenous education is used when the person refers to education in Rapa Nui language and knowledge, without referring to any of the above in particular. In this sense, indigenous education is a flexible concept that

relates to both of the above, but goes beyond them. Of course, these ‘placements’ in the participants’ quotes are interpretations I have made based on the shared moment of the interview.

As is explained in the previous chapter, the Māori term *whaka-whānaungatanga* is utilised within a Rapa Nui context. *Whānaungatanga* can be understood as the building of relationships in a research context (Bishop, 1996). In this particular scenario, I refer to the building of relationships that the participants have established through years of research in the realm of Rapa Nui language and education.

In this story, the whānau is held together by their diverse interests in a common subject. This whānau will represent a person and a group of people at the same time, understanding that no common subject is worked through by itself. Therefore; “To ‘warm up’ to the subject... education was in my day, completely in Spanish language, and it was very frustrating for me to not know the language that the nuns used to teach us.”

All the voices that introduce themselves here, have related experiencing formal education in different ways throughout time. They all went to school, although the experiences they had there are diverse. The teachers and school managers trained either on the Chilean mainland, or through long distance studies. Together they reflect extensive experience working in schools, assuming different roles within institutions throughout time.

A large majority of them considered that the first roles they had in these institutions was a circumstantial placing that gave them the possibility of ‘entering’ the educational arena. For the Rapa Nui members of this whānau, their interest in teaching their language and knowledge relates to a critical view of their own experiences of formal education, and the positive reinforcement of their own culture in the family.

“When you leave your community for a long time, and you are coming back once a year; you can visualize the changes... Social, linguistic and cultural change. What I was concerned about had to do with my experience of culture shock; lack of language, and arriving to another country to pursue studies.” “My father was a man who wanted us to be professionals, but never in my life did I hear from him that to be professionals and to achieve all that, we should let go of our language. That’s how he was, he did not discriminate because you weren’t a professional it was because you had bad Spanish, but I heard experiences of [other] people, even saying ‘what for?’ or ‘that no where else you will speak your language’.” “I had no major conflicts to learn Spanish. In my family, I was never encouraged to speak Spanish and neither was Rapa Nui prohibited.” “My family has always supported me, that is my extended family, not just my parents; they have always been pro-culture, pro-language, concerned with maintaining local traditions.”

“Then I realized - from year to year, with great sadness - that my grandparents were trying to speak that bad Spanish, that bad Castilian to the younger children, and how as time went by there were fewer children talking in our language, or playing, something absolutely ordinary!” “They probably thought it was better for when their children went to the mainland to study.”

“So this marked the way for me, to focus on how you can contribute to your people, your community.” What was then a clear goal turned, for most, into a windy road: “My studies didn’t give me a place, when I returned, to work in the language issue.”

The younger generations of school teachers and staff do not recall their formal education being in conflict with their culture; “because in the time I went to school we spoke in Rapa Nui there [in school]. My generation, until today, we communicate in Rapa Nui.” “We had Rapa Nui language classes, plus we had a few hours of what was kind of a ‘culture workshop’ were Papa

Kiko taught us history, kai-kai and music.” “My generation onwards, we lived on another [experience of the Chilean] continent, the continent of openness, of opportunities; that one arrives speaking in Rapa Nui and speaking in Spanish. Fortunately in my family we spoke Rapa Nui, I learned Spanish in school and I improved a little bit more my Spanish when I pursued my studies [in Chile] .”

“And when I get to the mainland to pursue teaching studies, the first thing I’m asked [by the people there] was: ‘are you from Rapa Nui?’ and then ‘You do not look like a Rapa Nui.’” And I say ‘Yes, of course because my father is from the continent and my mother is Rapa Nui. I have the mix.’ So they would ask ‘But do you speak the language?’ I say ‘Yes’ and that changes the whole situation. Because when other people ask and you can answer, it makes you feel good about yourself.”

For Chilean members of the whānau, their arrivals to school (and Rapa Nui) were the result of “circumstantial reasons”; until “you end up falling in love with the job.” “I’ve spent, in this community, over thirty years, which makes me quite knowledgeable about what contemporary education has been like.” Learning through “all these different processes that have unfolded through time, periods of development and permanence in this community” they acknowledge that through their experience, they have come to value Rapa Nui language and culture. They recognize that national guidelines pose a conflict for the school in this community and, therefore, work on developing possibilities to overcome this.

“[When] I finished my postgraduate studies I argued that the curriculum should have a more predominant local relevance, because there was already academic literature registering an increasing loss of language, in a dangerous way, because both the community or part of the community did not understand the dilemma of defending what is their own; and partly

because the system itself was very imposing. It was a yes or no, there was no alternative.”

The participants generally agreed that their participation in the indigenous education programme was nurtured by a growing awareness among the community of the ‘threat of extinction’ of the Rapa Nui language, as discussed elsewhere<sup>99</sup>. “That motivated me to study at a distance in order to work as a teacher of Rapa Nui language and culture.” Or for those who were trained teachers from the mainland, “then I started to like teaching in Rapa Nui language.”

“For a series of reasons, I started doing adult literacy here in the evenings, and I was jumping on the wagon of educating, and educating provided it was in our [Rapa Nui] language. I wanted to do something so our language wouldn’t escape from us so soon, so it wouldn’t be lost so quickly in time. Slowly entering school, with a lot of difficulty because I brought an issue that was not [considered] an issue at that moment in school.”

“It wasn’t a topic in education that children could construct their knowledge in Rapa Nui, not at all. There was though, the issue of teaching Rapa Nui as a subject, three to four hours a week, which began in the [year 19]76’, but in turn, the language was deteriorating in children, you could pretty much walk around the yard, and not hear any kid speaking in Rapa Nui; this is in the 80’s. And my daughters were babies, two to three years. They spoke Rapa Nui and at that time it was rare. It was weird.”

What seems to be true in all their stories is that “you have the drive of what you want for your own” and “that was the drive to slowly incorporate [Rapa Nui language and culture] into the educational system.” After at least a decade of working in indigenous education, “I feel really empowered in curricular terms, I think I know a lot and that in knowing, my job is of

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<sup>99</sup> See Chapter 3.

service. I am here to serve this community, and if they need me for something, whether paid or unpaid, I am at the service of the community, because I feel it as a vocation. But that has been one within many other things, because the truth is that the work here is very demanding.” “It has no limits; I mean you live for school, but I feel greatly enriched.”

### **The School’s Indigenous Education Programme**

This school continues the story of development of Rapa Nui indigenous education in such a way that “new milestones have been added in curriculum development, regarding the incorporation of [Rapa Nui] language into teaching.” They have “specialized in two very distinct areas that are immersion and interculturalism: one is the teaching of content only in Rapa Nui language and the other one teaches in two languages (Spanish and Rapa Nui) .”

At the moment, Rapa Nui language is taught compulsorily for all children of the school, reaching currently up to year eight. “If it’s compulsory, it means the subject affects the promotion of students to the next grade, that is to say, you consider their marks.” There is an immersion programme that works within the same school, where children are meant to receive all their subjects in Rapa Nui language. The appropriated study programmes that guide teacher’s practice through the school term – both for immersion and interculturalism - have been officially approved by the Ministry of Education (or Mineduc<sup>100</sup>) until year four. This recent achievement is the outcome of a long struggle we will now turn towards, told through the experiences of school staff and Rapa Nui language teachers.

“Through the years we came to realize that it was possible to work with immersion, that children do learn, that they are extremely fast and that it

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<sup>100</sup> The term Mineduc comprises the Chilean Ministry’s name in Spanish (‘Ministerio de Educación’, since 1990), and is frequently used by participants to refer to this institution.



did not cause any delay in terms of learning.” “That made it possible to continue working in a more relaxed way because, when it was a pilot, there was a continued diminishing of the immersion programme,” so in “the early years we had to work hard to earn, foremost, the trust of parents.” “They are the ones who bring resources; their children of course.”

Searching out ways to “win over the parents,” “before they started with the immersion course, a year before, we were interviewed, and we were asked.”

“When she told me about the immersion programme, I was excited and I said yes, I will support you; my son will be in the immersion class. He began with immersion in kindergarten, and continued there until fourth grade and he had every subject in Rapa Nui, I remember that.” “I was very concerned with the programme, and also of making sure they were not missing students, because of course you can’t do classes without students. And also encouraging the children a lot.”

“Many of these parents do not speak Rapa Nui today, and some of them said that because they didn’t know how to speak they wanted their children to speak, because it is our language, or because it is good for them to know two languages.” “We make sure that children speak Spanish and we send him to school to learn Rapa Nui; when it should be the other way around!”

“The same parents would measure the knowledge of their children, comparing them with children of the Hispanic class, they were always comparing.” “We had a lot of pressure, internal and external; coming from the community, from the same families.” “But when they heard them speaking in Rapa Nui - because the children did not speak in Rapa Nui with them - that they were learning, reading, that they could write and work on mathematics in Rapa Nui, it was surprising because one must understand that these generations [of parents] were fully educated in Spanish language, almost entirely, except for the Rapa Nui hours they might have had.”

However, “they started visualizing that they could learn and they could speak Rapa Nui” at the same time.

“In 2004 we had the First Congress of Intercultural Bilingual Education, at the community level, which was sponsored by the Municipality, The Ministry of Education and the Council of [Rapa Nui] Elders.” The local community was invited and “it was like a language seminar which also involved people from different places; for example people from the Academy of Language of Chile were invited, a person from the University of Chile... and in that situation, agreements were made. [These agreements were] to continue with the immersion programmes, that immersion should start from early childhood, that schools need to elaborate appropriated plans and programmes and that it is necessary to preserve the language and culture. So - responding to the demands of the Rapa Nui community- we have been working on the basis of these agreements.”

That same year the Academy of Rapa Nui Language was legally constituted, to strengthen uniformity in language writing and production of literary and education texts. “We care about the need to have a policy regarding language [annotation], so we work hand in hand with the people of the Academy, and we also gain support from Robert and Nancy Weber. Actually we have recently asked them to re-print the texts they had developed [in the 90’s] to teach reading and writing in Rapa Nui, and we use these books in the classroom as well<sup>101</sup>.”

The indigenous education programme strengthened through parental support, the local development of Rapa Nui language literacy and the use of spaces that had been opening up in Chilean educational policies: “A decree law allowed schools to develop their own plans and programmes, according

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<sup>101</sup> Weber, Roberto and Thiesen de Weber, Nancy. 1990. Textbook series: Mai ki hāpī tātou i te tai’o ‘e i te papa’i i to tātou ‘arero rapa nui (‘Let’s learn to read and write our Rapa Nui language’). Eight volumes. Universidad Católica de Valparaíso and the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Programa Lengua Rapa Nui.

to the context where the school was located. These could be the same, similar, or totally different to the [national] curriculum.” It was a restructuring of the “old complementary plans” that now would be called “[ap]propriated plans and programmemes<sup>102</sup>.” And “EIB was a growing topic in the mainland.”

The Programme of Intercultural Bilingual Education (PEIB or EIB, in Spanish) had been institutionalized separately within the Ministry and it began to build a targeting policy and a gradual expansion to establishments located in areas of high indigenous concentration, according to the guidelines of the Indigenous Law enacted almost a decade earlier. “So we started to request support from the Ministry of Education,” particularly as a way to respond to the apprehension of parents and local authorities. When the immersion programme had just started, “people from the Ministry came and they presented the situation to parents. Then they said; ‘you have to seize the moment because of all the indigenous peoples existing in Chile, Easter Island is the most powerful because they have already been working for a long time. Mapuche people do not yet decide what type of orthographic structure to use, the Aymara walk in the clouds, everything is oral’; so that injection helped us to keep working.” In June 2004, the Ministry issued a decree “which says that Rapa Nui language teaching in this school is compulsory from year one to eight.”<sup>103</sup>

“These legal actions allowed us to develop better the language, and here we had established a strong team with experience.” “We delved deeper into the subject of language, following the structure of the national curriculum to make plans. At that time we had no programme of study but as a group we agreed on criteria for thematic units that we were going to work on. We designed thematic units for each month, rotating through conceptual topics that are important in the Rapa Nui culture.” “We had the support of the

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<sup>102</sup> Planes y programas propios” (PPP). Refers to Decree Law N°40/1996 Mineduc.

<sup>103</sup> Refers to Decree Law N°235/2004 Mineduc.

auxiliary roles, which has been a foundation for good teaching, to have two people in the classroom to make education more personalized, and for children to see that they talk [in Rapa Nui] among themselves.”

“However, we were missing more people, if we wanted to get to fourth grade.” “The only thing the authority of that time allowed us to do was to integrate people as assistants or monitors.” “Their contracts did not give any assurance of continuity: the projects were valid for a year and at the end of each year we had to fight to keep them going... As the class rotation occurs and new teachers had to be incorporated; we were concerned that there were no Rapa Nui language teachers, because none had the specialty and no university could teach language, specifically Rapa Nui language.” “The management of school did not believe in this very much” and “this coincided with the fact that the municipal authorities questioned us, because most of them were from the mainland”, and some “had a lot of audience.” “Children should not learn Rapa Nui in school because it will not serve them: that was the discourse.”

“In this process, because of the internal school system, we lost significant Rapa Nui teachers and this destabilized the organization that we were following, but we managed to find support in our local authorities at that time.” “The only ‘stumbling block’ was that those teachers with no qualification had to complete their long distance studies, and many had left it aside because to do that you need to communicate online, and have those skills and mastery of technology; so they enrolled, but then some abandoned their studies.”

The growth and the learning obtained were yet to experience a new setback; according to new orientations permeating from the change of municipal authorities in 2009. “It was like going back ten years”; because the opposition to the programme increased, “and it was about to disappear.”

The pressure for better SIMCE<sup>104</sup> scores intensified both from parents and authorities, and in search for “those guilty”, teachers of the school were “virtually diminished, qualified and non qualified.” “The biggest attack was a ‘if a Rapa Nui teacher does not obtain qualification, they will be left out of the system’.” “It was really a Western view.”

“The Hispanic class in second and fourth grade was low in students so they were put in the same classroom as those who were learning in our native language.” “Some of our own did a part in supporting these decisions... from fear imposed by this new idea, that what mattered was the SIMCE”; “parents [also] said that what matters is the SIMCE.” In addition, due to the retirement of one experienced members of the school staff, a new coordinator came in replacement; with no previous experience with indigenous education; that “said that the immersion programme was useless, that it did not work and that we had to prioritize SIMCE.” “The municipal authority on the educational level did not believe in this programme either, that is why I say that everything went back to how it used to be; everything pointed to obtaining high achievers in SIMCE and PSU results.”

This push turned into an internal policy of “calling it immersion programme” but when entering the classroom, “close the door and teach in Spanish, because we have to get SIMCE results, and language does not work.” “That meant working with two goals, which is illogical. The programme is to strengthen the Rapa Nui language, but you walked in the

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<sup>104</sup> SIMCE (‘Sistema de Información y Medición de la Calidad de la Educación’). In English this can be translated as: ‘system of information and measurement of the quality of education’. It is a national standardized test for primary and secondary education; introduced in the late 80’s, as one of the pillars of the neoliberal education model imposed in Chile by the dictatorship of Pinochet (Castro- Paredes 2012, p. 105). This model would be subsequently expanded by the subsequent centre-left governments after the return of democracy (Meckes & Carrasco 2010). Currently, SIMCE measures national curricular objectives as established by the Ministry of Education for the following subject areas: Mathematics, Language (Spanish), Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and recently English.

classroom and they were working to improve skills in Spanish: in reading and writing, everything thought in Spanish, whereas how to teach the native language had not been properly worked out yet.”

“We did not coincide with that thought; so we resorted back to the Ministry, where the heads had changed, and then we safeguarded ourselves with the law 169<sup>105</sup>.” The Ministry said: ‘okay, this has already borne fruit’: “even evidence showed that they had a slightly higher score than the Hispanic class in the SIMCE.” “And they decreed again; the immersion programme is official, but only in first grade. We told them, this does not help us. The Mineduc said let’s go piano piano until we do every year, but at the same time you have to sit down to develop curriculum because that was our stop.” And that gave birth to “the development of curriculum in indigenous language, Rapa Nui language.” “We have done four years that to this day have been approved, and with that there was no one to stop us.”

After the ‘crisis’, the Ministry of Education signed to a project for the strengthening of the immersion programme<sup>106</sup>. Although this was not the first time the programme had been “officially recognized”, or supported, this time “the Minister came to this yard to sign it.” “I was surprised of his vision when he was Minister of Education, being from the right-wing and everything; because I explained our issue briefly, that we wanted to revitalize the Rapa Nui language so that children could speak, but on the other hand we had the requirements of the national [educational] system. This was the government that pushed the red, yellow and green traffic lights

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<sup>105</sup> Refers to the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989. Also known as ILO-convention 169, or C169. It was subscribed by Chile on September 15, 2009.

<sup>106</sup> Project: “La Lengua y la Cultura Rapa Nui se Revitalizan”: Proyecto de Fortalecimiento de la Educación Intercultural Bilingüe, en Cultura y Lengua Rapa Nui año 2011-2014. Programa de inmersión y sector lengua indígena. year 2013. The cooperation agreement was signed by the Minister and the municipality of the island.

according to SIMCE results<sup>107</sup>. And his response was ‘you do not have to worry about the traffic lights. You should not even consider SIMCE because your task goes to a different north’. Although the Ministry had supported us before, he came here and made a ceremony, and the local authorities were there. This being said by the highest authority of the moment, for us it was another backup, a huge support.”

### **“Struggling to get back our culture”: Parents for Indigenous Education**

When I asked parents about their participation in the development of indigenous education programmes, they said their contact with the school’s story has varied, of course, according with the times their own children were students. “When my children went to school they were already ten years old, so they were too big to enter the immersion programme.” “I was never a parent of the immersion class, but I can speak to you a little bit about the subject... believe me, all the years my children were in school I asked they provided someone who could speak Rapa Nui to teach my children. And not only that, also that they knew how children here are like, and have a little bit of patience with them. They needed to understand there was a language problem too, it was a problem because children here don’t see things in the same way they do in the mainland. Even comparing with our experience, we arrived to school without speaking Spanish; we learned the language in school; and at the same time learning a little history and all that.” “It would have been easier if I had the luck of other parents that could choose to enrol their children in an indigenous education programme.”

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<sup>107</sup> In early 2010, the Minister of Education Joaquín Lavín announced a controversial information tool based on traffic light colours to identify the quality of schools [based on SIMCE scores]. It was made so parents could choose a better establishment for their children. The practice showed that the overwhelming majority of students in ‘red’ and ‘yellow’ schools lived in poor and working class neighbourhood and could not ‘choose’. (Source: <http://ciperchile.cl/2011/03/03/las-desigualdades-sociales-que-desnudo-el-controvertido-semaforo-del-mapa-simce/>).

These voices recall the events of the school's story from a different angle, especially because they integrate experiences that ignore the constraints of the school system and relate to different historical periods; in their attempt to bring forward the underlying motives of their participation in (or perspectives of) the formal education of their children.

"Yes, she specifically asked me informally on the street, if I would be interested in putting my son in the **immersion** group and broadly explained the programme." "I trusted the programme; I said 'even better', because they will learn Spanish later." "I learned Spanish at age 8, 9, 10 years old; it was a bit hard at first but then when you grab the pace you learn fast. But to learn your own language is difficult. Why? Because you are bombarded with television, with music, with things that you are passionate about; that is, not that you love necessarily so they deceive you. Like advertisements, so many times you see the same one you end up buying the product and it turns out to be a really bad product."

"Back then I participated in meetings, not only in meetings but in everything that was needed, I was actively there." "And what kind of things were needed for example?" "Mostly to encourage parents to be with their children and to support them at home." "I was always going to school to ask how my son was doing, or how was the group doing; I was concerned that the whole group could progress equally."

"At the time I was also studying in Santiago, and that somewhat complicated my participation." "When my second child had to go to school, he didn't seem to gain interest for classes in Rapa Nui, so we discussed this and finally resolved to put him in the Hispanic class; so we could see the difference between my first and second child. But the difference was big. Because we speak Rapa Nui at home, my oldest son quickly understood everything we told him. In contrast, his brother was frequently confused between the Spanish he learned at school and what we taught him in Rapa



Nui. Then I put my third child in the immersion class again. Although we spoke Rapa Nui at home, he also had that problem, because they also had some school subjects taught in Spanish.”

“In this process there was a moment when the school sought to apply the same system as in the mainland. All teachers who came to school with their *pareu* aprons<sup>108</sup>, every one of them [appeared] with white aprons. In the classroom there was no talking in Rapa Nui, and my son lived through that process. Luckily my daughter did not, but my son was in third grade when they stopped the immersion programme. He was in the midst of immersion when they cut everything, and he told me: ‘no longer do I hear the teacher speak in Rapa Nui, they are not speaking to us in Rapa Nui [language] anymore in the classroom’. Because the system was forcing all the schools to be even, equal.”

“When my girls went to school it was totally different, because it wasn’t immersion anymore, it was EIB. The immersion programme no longer existed, it was disguised. I also complained when people from the Ministry of Education came, because through the EIB programme they were not encouraging immersion programme. They gave me a hardly convincing explanation to me at the time. Well, here we are.”

“Nevertheless, my children speak Rapa Nui, but a poor Rapa Nui. But hey, who does not speak poor Rapa Nui? Tell me who really speaks well their language nowadays? I always had problems with two of my children in the sense that either they spoke Rapa Nui or spoke in Spanish. I always told them the difference, ‘that is the limit. Clear. From my gate outside you can speak Spanish, inside that gate there you speak only in Rapa Nui. If not, you do not eat, you do not get what you want really’.”

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<sup>108</sup> ‘Apron’ refers to the teachers uniform, *pareu* is the tahitian word for a kind of flowered fabric.

“Other parents in the community had said ‘no, no, we don’t want this school because it has bad SIMCE results’ and take them out.” “All that had happened, and people started to enrol their children in other schools, and I told them: ‘but how? After all here we still have culture, I mean, we are still struggling to have immersion in Rapa Nui language, we have the compulsory Rapa Nui language class, Rapa Nui children and Rapa Nui teachers. If you take them out of here, they will lose that.”

“Everything related to Rapa Nui language and culture was removed. The new authority said there were no funds at all; no funds to continue immersion, no funds to pay the Rapa Nui monitors who taught the dances, songs, anything!” “Then the government authorities changed and the government of Piñera entered<sup>109</sup> and tried to wipe the slate clean, they wanted to do another process, another system. So we had to wait for the process of Piñera to move forward, but as parents we also began to make demands. We started having meetings at the Parent Center and I swear I had never seen so many people in meetings. Parents were feeling very angry and unhappy because they saw the school began to collapse.”

“When I arrived to the island [from Chile], one of the things I fell in love with, was the indigenous education programme in the school, so that was a hurtful process for me. I suffered because it kind of broke all the charm I had for the school, where you could hear children speaking in Rapa Nui during recess times.” “I kept saying: have faith that this is going to improve and that we as parents have to work towards the way of educating that we are losing, and find ways to attract people so they will bring their children again to this school.”

“So I started to complain to the teacher, then the principal, I complained a lot because I am one of the most demanding mothers. I must have a record in school history! But I didn’t do it in a bad spirit; I complained because I

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<sup>109</sup> Sebastián Piñera assumes as President of Chile in March 2010.

had enrolled my child in an immersion programme in school, but basically they were giving me another product.” “I had many problems at the time, and my involvement started to go down until I couldn’t give anymore.” “The more I demanded the less I was listened to, but still I trust this programme.” “After this happened you could no longer hear Rapa Nui dialogue in school, they maintained some indigenous education classes but there was a rupture there.”

The parents “began to gather, because most of the parents who chose this school wanted their children to have contact with the culture, the language, everything from here. That is what attached us to school and they were taking it all away, so we felt like we were left aside. [We asked ourselves] what do we do now?” “We started to fight: to pressure so that the indigenous education programme returned to school, and to give us the Rapa Nui monitors for the cultural part.” “Before, the parents were not always officially informed, especially in the previous administration, and many times we obtained information unofficially of internal problems at school, and then we got involved. We made it known that our children, and us as parents, are the customers of the school and as such we need to be heard; without our children there is nothing.”

In 2008 there was a diagnostic study of the school “undertaken by people from the University of Chile. I wasn’t very involved at the time, but workshops were held in the school where all the parents gathered - not just the Parent Centre - and made groups to talk about what we want from education, what we want for the school... For example, one mother said: ‘I have my daughter from pre-kinder here in school, and they say that here the Rapa Nui language is spoken, the culture; and it turns out my daughter comes home and says ‘the teacher said such and such’. But I want my daughter to tell me ‘te māori hāpī...’, that she tells me in Rapa Nui!’... In these workshops the University worked with teachers and parents separately... So they would ask us parents some questions and we

answered, almost like a survey. We made groups and then chose between the surveys the issues that we thought were the most important, like: ‘despite the fact that our children are learning Rapa Nui language, we don’t want them to lose continuity in mathematics’, or ‘we want school to have Rapa Nui monitors to teach workshops on kai kai, songs and dancing’... Like a thousand questions they asked us.”

“After this study, the ‘Institutional Educational Project’, was sought to be implemented here in school. First an improvement project, and then through the Ministry of Education, came this project of the Institutional Educational Project.” Also known as PEI, this is a governmental initiative that was initially developed in the 90’s in the context of a targeting programme for schools with low SIMCE scores<sup>110</sup>. The initiative is focused on promoting school identity and therefore strengthen the autonomy of school.

“But as I say, first the study<sup>111</sup> was made; and based on this study the PEI is implemented... the mayor was also struggling to find the money for this, along with the principal.”

“The indigenous education was what appealed to me about this school: I had my son and I stayed with faith. I stayed at school expecting this to be reconsidered. Luckily it was worth it: between 2011 and 2012, Rapa Nui language immersion began to revive. Now with a more secure financing, more laws, and we also have the Institutional Educational Project.” “The Ministry of Education had appointed us as a Bilingual Intercultural Education school, and we have been acquiring a certain status within the community here.”

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<sup>110</sup> This was known as the ‘Program of the 900 schools’; which developed the PEI (‘Proyecto Educativo Institucional’) to support school management.

<sup>111</sup> The external consultancy undertaken that year developed a strategic plan of improvement for the school, projecting changes for the following ten years. (Plan Estratégico 2008-2018). This document will be considered in the next chapter.

“And how can parents become involved in the schools work on indigenous education?” “In two ways; we exert pressure and we collaborate. Because we are [constituted as] the Parents Centre, when a project in school comes up we are asked if we support or reject it.”

The Parent Centre is expected to warrant channels of communication with the community of parents that are appropriate, and participate in the school’s decisions. “The school presents a project and then our signature as Parents Centre supports, or does not support certain projects. For example they would say ‘we want to make a purchase of twenty guitars, twenty ukuleles and we want to hire a monitor to teach them during children’s recreation time; what do you think?’ And we think ‘yes of course!’” To be representative of parental demands, the Centre must comply with meetings at least once a month, “or at least a certain amount per year, to ask for support from all moms and dads; to ensure that parents are well informed. I like the whole school and the whole school community to be informed; even if not all parents come to the meetings but maybe half... and you know here the moai mail<sup>112</sup> goes around fast. The idea of meetings is to see if they like the direction we are taking, and to back us up in our decisions, because we can not take decisions alone” (...).

We are always trying to be there, for example, now we are starting with this Institutional Educational Project, and we currently supervise if it is being fulfilled.” “We are just starting with this Educational Plan and the school has also started to present some projects: there is a project to make a music room with instruments and pay a music teacher, hopefully to teach Rapa Nui music. Also to purchase dictionaries. Among others, these are all projects that we are supporting and overseeing that they are gradually

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<sup>112</sup> The voice here refers to what is popularly known in the island as “el correo del moai” in Spanish. In my point of view the term highlights the community’s oral ways of sharing information and relevant news to the people involved by them. It can also refer informally to gossip. In 2009, a local newspaper was founded with that name as well ([www.elcorreodelmoai.com](http://www.elcorreodelmoai.com)).

fulfilled.” “These initiatives are managed by the school, and if we see that these projects freeze and no one sees anything, we go to school and ask ‘why, what is happening with the project?’” “The idea of supervising is so we can see it, notice it; make sure the plan is being carried out.”

“There are also cultural exchange projects for children to go Aotearoa, Hawaii... all these cultural exchanges we support them or we don’t; we also have to sign the permission for the children to go to these cultural exchanges. And we mostly support them; it’s in our interest to open horizons for our children.”

“In general, the initiative of such projects is pushed through by the school, or by parents?” “Look, at the moment mostly from school. Because I swear in the school we have a problem of very careless parents... it is like kindergarten: they leave their kids, go to work and they forget and leave the school to do their... many times the school has had to contain children with social problems.” “There are many children in social risk at school. Then I say that the school; I take my hat off to school. They have had to deal often with problems at school, problems that come with the house, the home, with family.”

In a different experience; “I participated in a programme done by the teachers in school, that even led to a consultation - I cannot remember if it was earlier this year or last year- to consult if the community approved [the programme<sup>113</sup>].” “It was open for the entire community, but like every other consult that has been carried out here in the island, it was not well informed. I realized this because the school’s plans and programme, we worked on it for two years, if I’m not mistaken every Saturday. They had invited a lot of people from the community, but as you know, sometimes you invite a lot of people to work but they finally do not commit to

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<sup>113</sup> Refers to the development of appropriated study programs 2008 onwards.

participating. But when the job is finished, and you want to ask people their opinion, there are many who criticize, but few who actually contribute.”

“The idea was to consult the community if they agreed with the plans and programmes; there was a presentation made with power point. But I think what was missing was to mention that the work had been done collaboratively, because someone there was worried if it had been passed through the Academy of [Rapa Nui] Language, if it had included the community; Yes! That was missing, to explain everything that the plans and programmes had been created with people of the community, they were not developed in the mainland.” “I do not know what the result of the consultation was.”

Because of the focus of the research, the parents I interviewed for this case study mostly describe themselves as being active and participatory in the school, and in the educational process of their children. However, their voices express awareness of a criticism focused towards parents (from school, or from other parents), out of their lack of participation in meetings or school activities. This is characterized in their stories as the option of “taking their kids to school in March and not return until December” and their own stories suggest why this might happen.

“How can I say this... when it came to my last child, I did what other parents do, you know why? Because I was always there for meetings, or whatever. But I do not know if those meetings are to do something productive that benefits children, or because you have to comply with the meetings that teachers are required to do monthly. Do you know what I mean? In the end, I decided to tell the head teacher, ‘if my son has a problem or if you have something you want to communicate, you can call me on the phone and give me a date and time so we can talk. I come down, we talk about the specific issue that my son has and nothing else’.” “Because after all you realize that meetings are made to meet up with their requirements. Or

when there is some kind of activity, some people visiting the school, they invite you again.”

“Year after year, in the meetings we have every month, I go to school to hear: ‘you know, the problem that your child has... he has problems’. They always said in school he had a problem; I do not even remember the word now, I forgot. But that is what bothers me: if you detected this last year, what can we do this year so we can fix what he has? What we can do? What I need when I go to school is not for you to tell me the problem that the kid has; what I need is for you to tell me what you have so we can avoid the problem with the child.” “That is why I complained; my older son had that problem. They noticed it in year six or eight. He finished school then came my daughters, and now my youngest son, and he still has that problem? So what we have done in all these years? What do you have, what solution do you have? That’s what I need! If there is a problem between the parents and the school; we find the solution.”

“I think if my children had had a teacher there, so he or she could explain the contents in Rapa Nui, I think they would have succeeded, achieved so much. And I think it is difficult for children from here. I cannot speak for other people’s children, but I speak to you of our children: they just had to learn two things at the same time when they were at school... I think it’s a privilege, it would have been a privilege for me if my children got to be in the immersion programme.”

“What happens in my case, I had my children young... [the first] at age twenty-one and then the other children. You have that vision that you have your children; you send them to school to be educated. That is the basics you know of life, right? But with time, when children have been in school and years go by, you see, and as a person you become mature. You learn these things; that there are many things of value, that as a part of this cultural group we lose with that education that one says, ‘Well, I’ll send my



child to school to be educated.' I think maybe that is education in the sense that children learn to read, learn that education as a life skill to be inserted in this society, to have a job and all that. But apart from that, you lose a lot in identity. I think that by sending my children, they have lost a great deal of their identity as someone from this indigenous people."

### **Searching for dialogue between school and the community of parents**

Hereafter, the story illustrates the participants' perceptions of the spaces that are currently available for Rapa Nui knowledge in formal education. This section also offers a perspective of the collaboration between parents and school, particularly for the development of indigenous education programmes. The voices are threaded together attempting a dialogue between participants. They are, however, impossible dialogues, in the sense that these voices speak separately, each one from a particular point-of-view. Contradiction and distance are therefore, part of this dialogic story, while also hinting at potential common ground from where meaningful discussions might take place between the school and the community of parents. In this section, the standpoint of voices will be identified broadly in the quotes, to facilitate the recognition of the challenges and the potential of this dialogic story. This is performed by distinguishing those who speak from school, and those who speak from the community of parents, to maintain anonymity while furthering insight on the places from where the voices speak.

At the present moment "we have study programmes for Language, Music, Art and Physical Education... These are more flexible spaces; there is no SIMCE in those areas... that is why they have been worked through, more than the other subjects." "One of the obstacles has been the fact that to make these programmes we have to be based on what is going to be questioned in the SIMCE test; so we always reach the same point... It is the

same with the plan of shared support<sup>114</sup>, which is another initiative of this government. The material, workbooks and tests are all in Spanish; so you need to be translating..." (School).

"How many years has it been since people here started insisting about the SIMCE programme, of the need to create an exam that is appropriate for children here, for the children of the immersion programme. How many years have passed? That is why I tell you, nothing can be done until policies change." "If the law does not change, you are fighting the wind and you fail to get results" (Parents).

"In terms of programme, there is still a lot to do. We have our own programmes... but they are, how can I say this, they have not consolidated." "In technology we are deficient. In science [too]." "We urgently need to have specific programmes for natural sciences, and Rapa Nui history. At the moment there is none." "Some learning areas are treated according to the context, but we are still teaching the contents of the mainland curricula. So the idea is to change that... In math we are at rock bottom. We incorporated a 'mentor teacher', which means that there is a math specialist in the classroom for the programme of immersion. The idea was that the math teacher would give classes to the children, but with the immersion teachers inside so they could learn [how to do it themselves] in a period of two or three years. Two years have passed and we still have no results." "And that teacher or mentor, does she or he speak in Rapa Nui or in Spanish?" "No. In Spanish... Because of the SIMCE, the school decided that since math and science -formerly called 'understanding of the environment'- had the lowest

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<sup>114</sup> Plan de Apoyo Compartido (PAC) "is an initiative implemented by the Ministry of Education in over a thousand schools across Chile since March 2011, which incorporates methodologies for successful learning both from Chile and abroad, focusing on capacity building in schools in five essential aspects: effective implementation of the curriculum, fostering a positive school climate and culture for learning, optimizing the use of academic learning time, monitoring of student achievement and teacher professional development. To achieve this, the Ministry delivered teaching tools, teaching methodologies and systematic technical advice." (source: <http://www.apoyocompartido.cl/Paginas/Pac.aspx>)

scores, math class should be given in Spanish, because then the children have to sit through the SIMCE test” (School).

“Are you still working on planning and creating further programmes?” “We are waiting for the Ministry of Education to give us a notice, because our intention was to develop appropriated plans from first to eighth year, but because there was an educational reform this was left from year one until year six<sup>15</sup>.” “When we were doing the fifth [year], we were told ‘you know what, stop a little bit because you are ahead of other indigenous peoples [of Chile], wait until the rest can meet up’.” “To this day, we have been waiting three or four years to start developing year five. The reason for them is that we cannot move ahead of other [indigenous] peoples, so we need to wait for the Mapuche to agree on their criteria and everything” (School).

One of the issues that comes from within these stories is that the participants recognize the political support of the Ministry of Education, and consider that it has been necessary to carry out the present advancements. They accuse a constant instability in the policies pushed through by the successive governments, regarding indigenous education. The change of personnel in Mineduc, the island’s municipality and the school, deeply affected the development of the indigenous education programme in the last decade. Furthermore, this brings about the enforcement of several regulations and policies that are incoherent in their final aspirations.

The same Mineduc that decreed that the school would be ‘officially bilingual’; through the “provincial education department (DEPROV), “said the subject of Spanish language was compulsory, [even] in the immersion

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<sup>15</sup> The educational reform of 2009, through the enactment of the General Law of Education N°20.370 (in Spanish, ‘Ley General de Educación’ or LGE). This law redefines educational cycles in 6 years of primary and 6 years of secondary schooling; changing the previous scheme of eight years of primary and four years of a secondary cycle. This curricular shift is supposed to come into effect in 2017.

programme, that it has to be part of the Language and Communication learning area. So the difference is that [in the immersion programme] they have nine hours of Rapa Nui Language a week and Spanish language is four hours; and in the Hispanic class this is reversed. So that's the dynamic we have always tried to adjust to. But there is still a lot that needs to be done; a whole lot" (School).

"Many people insist that to teach in both languages is necessary. Today the Spanish I don't think it is necessary. Teach only in Rapa Nui because all the media, everywhere you go, everything is in Spanish. There is no other way, they will learn Spanish; but what they won't learn, and you see it today, is Rapa Nui" (Parents). "You cannot, there is no legal framework that says this school is [exclusively] an immersion school" (School).

There seems to be a need for policy makers to realign assessment so Rapa Nui immersion students can be authentically assessed. "There are many things to improve and to reflect about: the same curriculum, the evaluative processes. For example the evaluation processes at the national level, the SIMCE, is a national requirement. But there is no SIMCE in Rapa Nui language. There is not even the choice of performing an oral SIMCE in Rapa Nui language, which could be another alternative" (School). This poses a challenge for national educational goals, ultimately defined by SIMCE results; which fail to take the local goals into account.

"The demand is still good, and we need to promote articulations between teachers with different Rapa Nui language competencies. The idea is not to disengage the students from the language when they pass from year four to five, which is when this change occurs... One language cannot disappear in favour of the other. That is not the idea. There must be a collaborative work. It cannot be only us as the school; we need to articulate with other educational institutions to do our best efforts in promotion and protection of Rapa Nui language... There is a need to establish new balance between

local and national goals; and make sure the latter takes into consideration the internal dynamic exercised here, locally. These are unique, personal experiences” (School).

Yet the progress that is seen to be made can often be undermined by the change in policies affecting the school, which lack of value for the development of Rapa Nui education.

“It has been a few years already working on this; and then some years pass by and they include again subjects in Spanish. When you are trying to go one step forward, do not do ten steps back, do you understand what I mean? And there are things that have to do with the parents at home too. I do not know how to convince them, how to explain to them, to our own people. To the grandparents: ‘to the sons and daughters you must speak in Rapa Nui’. Some say they do not talk to them because they want them to learn Spanish, and that they will still learn Rapa Nui. But today that is not true.” “Not a security?” “No, not true. In our generation maybe, in their’s also; yes, one had to learn Spanish because in every house the families usually speak Rapa Nui, but today it is totally different” (Parents).

Regarding the relationship that the school has at the moment with their community of parents, the participants agree on the need to ‘reestablish trust’, as the only way to open further paths of advancement. These dialogues denote a positive attitude in this direction.

“The attitude of parents towards the school has been extremely confrontational in the past. I prefer to be on good terms with teachers; which is not to be cynical. But I do not want to create bad relationships between the parents and school; as if we were the monster for teachers; do you understand? Like ‘here comes the Parent Centre’ as in ‘here comes the trouble, the conflict’. Because that happened before, not that us parents really had that attitude, but there was a tendency to interpret it that way...

Thanks to that, now for everything they ask our opinion, based on what was done in 2011 and 2012; we earned some respect too... I think that if we are respected, they will respect us because we are doing things right... My idea is to support the school, support the principal because if I oversee this work there is no point in doing so in a bad spirit. In the end, the school will be against us, and that wouldn't work for anyone. We must attempt to do so with love, as the mayor says... This is my idea; any problems you have with teachers, find ways to improve it. Because I can say 'this teacher failed in this'; but the same teacher tomorrow may be great. We must take advantage and try for that teacher to improve... at the moment we cannot afford to lose our Rapa Nui teachers" (Parents).

Similarly the school values collaboration with parents. "We have a relationship, we want to foster a better relationship, we have to. This is not just an issue here in Easter Island. But I believe we will establish the basis for trust. I see the relationship with parents at the moment as highly positive, because I will not evade the issues, I will not avoid conflictive situations. On the contrary, I find solutions... I do not expect parents to give me problems, but solutions for the betterment of their issues. If you give me solutions to which I can respond, we can pursue the goal we want together. But if you give me problems, we are confrontational... Parents will tell me, 'no, I don't go to meetings because they charge the monthly fee.' That is the problem, so what do you need to do? The solution could be not to raise the issue of fees, or to look for another way to raise the funds that might be needed for the study trip, if that is the situation. But don't tell the parent: 'you have not paid,' because then there is no participation from parents... Ours is one of the few institutional educational projects (PEI), maybe nation-wide, which has a profile of the parent. With all the diversity, because here you have the whole spectrum of parents. So to try to achieve a profile, it is because we want this to be functional too. And I think that the educational project handles this very well" (School).

In spite of the struggles, both school and parents tell a story of positive cultural identity achieved through language for Rapa Nui.

“According to my view, this experience has always been a contribution, in the sense that children who have participated in the immersion programme, most of them are now studying higher studies in universities or institutes. And the immersion programme has been a contribution to their identity as Rapa Nui.” “My students in secondary school would question me; ‘what is the language good for if I’m going to study in the mainland?’ So I always told them: ‘at some point it will serve you.’ Many of those students who were against my class would later say ‘teacher, why didn’t I pay attention to you? Why didn’t I study Rapa Nui?’ And I asked ‘why?’ Because when you arrive [to the mainland] the first thing they ask you is: are you Rapa Nui? And if you say yes, they ask ‘and how do you say *this* [in Rapa Nui language]?’ ‘Oh, I don’t know’, ‘Ah, then you’re not Rapa Nui’; and their cultural identity drops to the floor. In contrast, those who might have had lower grades in school, always between the 4 and 5<sup>116</sup>, but master the language, they are recognized, and that changes the switch for them.” “They stand in a position of security.”

Finally, when I asked “Do you think it is possible, through collaboration with the community, to create a Rapa Nui education curriculum?” their answers expressed hope in the possibilities. “There are several intentions, I know....” I leave ‘hope’ in suspense here, to give a closure to this chapter of stories. In the following chapter, I will come back to these issues, following the story to highlight the paths of possibilities that these voices evoke.

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<sup>116</sup> The grading system in Chile uses a scale from 1 to 7, 7 being the highest score; and usually 4, or 3.5, the minimum score required to ‘pass’ (the test, to the next educational level, etc).

## **Mai hē tātou e haka ‘ite nei ki te nāpoki: a reflexive workshop**

In summary of the previous sections; the school currently offers parents “two parallel pathways; one is the Rapa Nui immersion course and the other is the Hispanic.” However, the ‘Hispanic class’, as it is called informally, “has an important intercultural component.” In addition, the school was recognized “officially bilingual” in 2004 (Decree law 235/2004), approving Rapa Nui language hours for all the students of the primary school, from year one to eight. In terms of curricular development, appropriated study programmes for both ‘pathways’ have been developed from year one to four of primary education, and approved under the Intercultural Bilingual Education scheme, as promoted by the Chilean government after the enactment of the Indigenous Law in 1993, and the educational reform of 1996. The development of indigenous education in school has been a struggle with considerable gains, despite the obstacles encountered. However, as we have read in the opinion of participants “there is still a lot that needs to be done; a whole lot.”

In my drawing out of the methodology to be employed in this research I decided to try a participative approach, to gain insight from the participants’ opinion of where my research could effectively contribute. So amidst hearing these stories in separate interviews, the participants were invited to a workshop. I was exploring participatory research and to coordinate the right times, dates and topics to carry out the workshop was not easy, trying to attend the diverse interests of each of us involved. The busy schedule of school staff and teachers was notorious, and not all of them could be in this activity. For the month I had programmed the workshop to take place, their calendar had mapped out five days of activities and workshops with the University of Chile on literacy and reading encouragement in schools, and a four day professional development course from the EIB department of Mineduc. This was planned on top of normal working hours, which for school teachers and staff, oscillated



between thirty eight and forty four hours a week. That was also the month of the yearly celebration of Chilean Independence Day, the 18<sup>th</sup> of September; which usually involves artistic and folkloric presentations to parents. The professional development course finally did not occur, which was disappointing for me as well, because I had been invited to participate so I could familiarize myself with the way they work on curriculum development. However, it did give better space for what turned out to be more like a 'meeting' to talk about indigenous education in Rapa Nui and the present challenges they face.

This gathering was held in the computer room at school, and I started with a presentation<sup>117</sup> of my story, a brief genealogy of my family and the places where I had grown up; and how that path eventually led me to Rapa Nui. This was my way of greeting them, or performing my own version of *mihimihi*. It seemed right to share with them how my interest in their work of indigenous education had been developed through my own involvement with Rapa Nui people, the affective ties I had created while living there and the learnings obtained on Rapa Nui knowledge and culture. I did not delve too much, but this act of 'placing' made sense to me. It also gave me the possibility of relating my own appreciation of the value given in Rapa Nui culture to genealogic knowledge - in their terms, 'haka ara' (whakapapa/genealogy) - and to the importance of taking a position. I also presented my research questions, and a brief account of the learnings obtained through my literature review at the time; to start what turned out to be a fruitful conversation; that allowed me to identify key themes to give a structure to my data analysis. Therefore, these themes will be discussed in the following chapter, where I return again; to a story of indigenous education in a school in Rapa Nui.

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<sup>117</sup> Refer to Appendix B for the workshop presentation (proposed) schedule.

## Chapter 6. New Places for Knowledge

**The development of the indigenous education programme has not been a linear development towards the incorporation of Rapa Nui knowledge. The stories seem oriented by a ‘spiral discourse’. As Bishop (2005) states for the discursive practices of Māori within a hui (gathering), in this case “the flow of talk may seem circuitous and opinions may vary and waver” (p. 122). Although this research must be differentiated from the oral discussions that can take place in a hui; in my own writing I agree that “the seeking of a collaboratively constructed story is central” (Bishop, 2005, p. 122).**

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In this chapter I focus on a general overview of supports and obstacles encountered by those interested in developing an indigenous education curriculum, and the collaborative work done up to the moment of this research, by teachers, parents and the wider community. I answer the questions of how has it been possible for the school to incorporate Rapa Nui knowledge into teaching; and how do school staff, teachers and parents participate in the development of an indigenous knowledge based curriculum.

The first issue to be discussed will be the historical paradox that underlies school, understood here as a broad concept that carries with it the history of formal education in Rapa Nui. From there on, the focus will be on the goals set by a national policies framework about education and indigenous education in particular, and how these connect –or not - with the goals set by the participants.

In general terms, the difference of perspective that each participant held about the possibility of indigenous education in school, relate strongly to their views about formal education as a concept that goes beyond this particular case study. Accordingly, a historical perspective has been crucial

to this research. The struggle that the school leads today for the recognition of indigenous knowledge within the national framework cannot be separated from the historical struggle that Rapa Nui people have engaged in this last century with the Chilean Government. Through the understanding of a historical context on the island, interpretations of the actual challenges of indigenous education are possible. In the following section, I present a dialogue between the author, the participants and their historical context. All the quotations without explicit referencing correspond to the participants of this research.

### **The Historical Paradox of Guilt and Responsibility**

#### Dialogue 1<sup>118</sup>:

- *“The interests and goals of whom, are being promoted by the educational system?”*
- *“Not mine, the others, ‘the strangers’, the interests imposed by the outsider.”*

Colonization and continued marginalisation of Rapa Nui culture and language are present throughout the stories of the establishment of formal education on the island<sup>119</sup>. From this perspective, formal education, particularly the institution of the school, appears as ‘guilty’ in the processes of language shift and cultural knowledge devaluation. This was enforced by the early formal educators<sup>120</sup> through different strategies, of which physical punishment is only one, that contributed to the silencing of Rapa Nui language and culture.

According to Haoa (2013) the exclusion of Rapa Nui language from formal

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<sup>118</sup> All the dialogues here showed respond to my own memory of the interactions that took place at the workshop carried out during fieldwork, which I wrote down after the event.

<sup>119</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>120</sup> See Chapter 3.

education in the early schooling process, can be read as a form of immersion teaching in Spanish for effective learning of the ‘de-contextualised’ content that students were expected to learn (p. 3). I agree that the teaching practices employed by the early educators in Rapa Nui are consistent with the expected outcomes of immersion in these two scenarios, which could be named as creating ‘new speakers’ of a language. The author poses a perspective of families and parents who wish to see their children developing and growing in knowledge. However, the stories that this research presents tell a story less focused on teaching practices, and more focused on meaning. This resonates with an understanding of language that is always contextualised, to the extent that there are people behind each word, in a specific context.

In this regard, historical relationships between Chile and Rapa Nui, and between indigenous and non-indigenous people on the island have undoubtedly affected the development of a Rapa Nui-based curriculum. Since the 1960’s there has been a growing influx of people from mainland Chile<sup>121</sup>. With this has come intermarriage, a process with significant impacts on the transmission of cultural knowledge and language. This occurred simultaneously with the silencing of the Rapa Nui language in formal education. Further, the co-existence of different knowledge systems in school generates confusion in the learning processes of Rapa Nui children and youngsters; especially when these contradictions are not acknowledged.

*“I mean, things are double for you as a student that arrives to school.*

*Not only do you have to learn to read and write, but also a language. I*

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<sup>121</sup> According to the 2002 census (which records 3,791 inhabitants in the island), 62% of the population identified themselves as Rapa Nui. In a 2010 survey of employment, 59.8% of respondents (80% of the population according to the same study) declare to be Rapa Nui. The remaining 40.2% would be people from a different origin, the second most numerous demographic group being that of mainland Chileans. The employment survey also explored the composition of family groups and states that 36.8% of the 1,363 surveyed households was predominantly composed of Rapa Nui people, and 31.3% by non-Rapa Nui .

*think because of that, there are problems with several parents [in school]. In this case it is different because well, they see things like children from here; and also the language issue, which is very difficult. So you need a little more patience with them, and to understand that there is a language problem too, there are problems that things do not look the same as [they do for] a child from the mainland”.*

From a historical perspective, the curriculum developed in the mainland for the island schools, has been predominantly in Spanish language. Thus, it stems from particular assumptions on the nature of reality. When one of these realities has a predominant space in school curriculum, it exercises a ‘symbolic violence’ over the ‘neglected’ reality; “which implies a power that manages to impose meanings and impose them as legitimate, concealing the power relationships to which it owes its own strength” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970, p. 21). A ‘violence’ that exceeds past the school setting, to the extent that it is assumed to be ‘real’ and ‘true’; while relying on a strength given, ultimately, by the power of these wide-ranging institutional structures that set the rules for education today. One prominent example of the consequences of such a ‘naturalisation of knowledge’ can be seen in the Western conception of ‘man’ and ‘woman’, which in turn challenges the indigenous meanings for the same words. The conflict here produced is explained by L. Smith (1999) regarding Māori stories:

*“Colonization is recognized as having had a destructive effect on indigenous gender relations which reached out across all spheres of indigenous society. Family organization, child-rearing, political and spiritual life, work and social activities were all disordered by a colonial system which positioned its own women as the property of men with roles which were primarily domestic” (p. 151).*

I believe neutral knowledge does not exist, it is always ideological. This is not to say that knowledge traditions are always in conflict, nor need their

ideological nature be considered a threat; but they demand awareness. Knowledge is built through human experience and interaction, and involves a 'place' from where the knowledge is created. These 'places' or 'positions' are partially represented in identification categories, but can only be 'defined' within a story of meaning.

The 'double learning' that Rapa Nui students have been expected to achieve, implies moving between two languages, which can also be considered as two worlds. In the words of Wittgenstein (1980) "We are struggling with language" (p. 11). This 'struggle' refers to an understanding of language that goes beyond words, to create worlds. It can be said that 'education' for Rapa Nui students, implies a struggle to 'make sense' of their own personal experience and the learnings obtained through formal training institutions. It can also be said that this particular research is part of a struggle to 'make sense' of my personal experience, and communicate it to others. This adds challenges in the search for knowledge, and creates confusion and insecurity when students are exposed to contradictions between knowledge traditions.

The idea that Rapa Nui language can be a 'threat' in the formal education context is easily understood; to the extent that it plays out today in high exclusion rates and lower results for Rapa Nui students. However, this understanding is only possible according to the definitions of what is 'relevant', and 'successful' decided by centralised policy-makers on the Chilean mainland. Moreover, the ideological reduction of education to the formal realm (Oliver, 1998) attempts a naturalisation of its own narrow definition of 'being successful'. Those who do not comply with these definitions are deductively framed as 'deficient' and their knowledge as 'irrelevant'. "If *that* was important, we would have learned it in school!" (Oliver, 1998, p. 301. Italics in the original.) Therefore, when the previous knowledge of a student (such as the mother tongue and the cultural context of early childhood) is not assessed or valued in formal education, it can be

seen as ‘irrelevant’, or ‘not necessary’ for academic achievement. In fact, cultural knowledge can be seen as a deficit. The dangers of such a simplified interpretation are far-reaching.

Moving away from these understandings, this research depicts the story of local agency, as the only way to understand the schooling process in Rapa Nui and the actual development of a culturally responsive curriculum in one of the island’s schools. This agency is built upon people’s belief in the educational value of the indigenous knowledge; despite adverse historical conditions.

In 1976, when classes of Rapa Nui language became part of the curriculum, 77% of the school students were native speakers of the indigenous language (Weber & Thiesen, 1998). “At that time, few people realised that Rapa Nui students were not learning because they did not understand Spanish, and this situation was not rectified until the vernacular language started to be introduced at the island’s only school [in 1976]” (Haoa, 2013, p. 3). These ‘few people’, managed to articulate a voice in their time, and when the situation became evident in the 1980’s, the local school teachers and staff had developed an ‘unwritten’ curriculum of indigenous education in the island’s school. While the school has been positioned as a dominating cultural influence, it has also been positioned as an avenue to reignite Rapa Nui language and culture. Rapa Nui people have engaged with formal education, establishing partnerships with non-indigenous people that have shown interest in the education of Rapa Nui knowledge.

In the participants’ stories, formal education is blamed for the displacement of Rapa Nui language and for encouraging families to reproduce the colonial language in their own interactional spaces. Over time, as the amount of people who speak predominantly Spanish in their homes increases, so does the pressure on ‘school’ to be the mainstay of Rapa Nui language for children. If thirty years ago the school was ‘guilty’ of language

shift, as the main colonial ‘dispositif’ in terms of Foucault (1979); today it is responsible for the reversal of that process. This is also seen as a process of ‘taking responsibility’ for the ‘guilty’ past of formal education.

This is the paradox that Rapa Nui educators are faced with today. I can only resolve this paradox by adopting a historical perspective, which highlights that the persistent silencing of Rapa Nui language and culture in formal education is inseparable from the impacts of a wider colonization process that has increasingly excluded parents and teachers (the educators) from the decision-making of what their children should learn, and what it is considered to be ‘educationally successful’. This creates incongruity between the goals developed at a national level and the pathways available for contextualised communities to achieve these goals. In the story of Rapa Nui, formal education comes to be understood as a conflict in the experience of those who attempted a pathway through formal education, only to see their hopes frustrated. Moreover:

*“Today, most parents are young people who did not live through that conflict, but conflicts are transmitted within the family, to the grandchildren ... and you can see that today in the Indigenous Education Programme.”*

While current educational policies may not endorse the same kind of violence that characterized formal education in the past, the stories of the participants express that it is still working to undermine indigenous knowledge and language on a less obvious level. Experiences of discrimination and belittling of Rapa Nui knowledge can be seen as ‘micro-aggressions,’ that can ‘trigger old wounds, residual internalized colonization, and unresolved crises in confidence that ultimately adversely affects the academic performance’ of indigenous students (Walters &



Simoni, 2009, p. 73)<sup>122</sup>. This research argues for a comprehension of language that is not independent from speakers. As Haoa (2013) suggests for the story of Rapa Nui people, the ‘loss of a tongue’:

*“is a social, cultural, and even spiritual problem. This is because our own Polynesian language, Rapa Nui, is devalued when it has no functionality in its community’s socio-economic, cultural, and spiritual development, when state institutions work only in Spanish, when most tourism is currently Spanish-based, and when the influx of Spanish speakers has grown considerably over recent decades - all of these factors have led to socio-cultural changes in the Rapa Nui community. Families have sought to send their children down different roads to their own in the hope of improving their quality of life, without their mother tongue, and that has to do with the soul, with feelings, with the relationships between people and with the ecosystem. There is a different world view, which adds richness and also exalts other cultures” (Haoa, 2013, pp. 1-2).*

The stories of indigenous educators bring awareness of how personal experiences impact on the willingness of teachers and parents to accept (or not) certain educational methods. The references that parents and teachers hold regarding what is the ‘best’ way to learn encounter difference and contradiction. As stated by one of the participants before, *‘you have the drive of what you want for your own’*. To this extent, I believe to be true what John Dewey said a century ago: “[W]hat the best and wisest parent wants for his [sic] own child, that must the community want for all its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely: acted upon, it

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<sup>122</sup> The quoted authors bring into this discussion an interesting perspective in the ‘transmission of conflict’ in the experience of indigenous peoples as a historical trauma that further affects health conditions of indigenous people today. Their work, historically situated among the American Indian Alaska Natives (AIAN), leaves room for an interpretation on current practices that overcomes deficit theorizing in favour of a holistic view of the ‘individual’ as part of a human collective.

destroys our democracy” (Dewey, [1902] 1967, p. 3).

However, what is considered possible, and appropriate in education has a strong connection with the way ‘we’ might have experienced this as children, as youngsters and as adults. This is a constant in the judgements made by both teachers and parents about the different indigenous education programmes applied in school. It underlies much of the resistance from parents and other stakeholders to accept the possibility of achieving their desires for ‘success’, by teaching and developing the Rapa Nui knowledge. Similarly, those who accept indigenous education programmes as a viable way towards knowledge, base this belief in their own experience:

*“I trusted the program, I said ‘even better’, because they will learn Spanish later. I also learned Spanish at age 8, 9, 10; it was a bit hard at first but then when you grab the pace you learn fast.”*

Today, the transmission of Rapa Nui knowledge and language, understood as a ‘primary’ step toward its perpetuation and development, is often placed in the school. This expectation is particularly evident in the experience of parents who do not communicate in Rapa Nui language at home, and appoint their children in the indigenous education program:

*“We make sure that children speak Spanish and we send him to school to learn Rapa Nui, when it should be the other way around!”*

To the extent to which these experiences are not considered in the planning of education, there is an inherent ambiguity present in the development of indigenous education policies for Rapa Nui. The ‘school’ as a place ‘steered from a distance’ (Lingard & Sellar, 2013); and the ‘school’ as a place for a meaningful education in the local context (Cajete, 1994), displays continuous conflict and competing demands.

## Pursuing two North's: Goals and Responsibility of School

### Dialogue 2:

- *"The school is part of a national system of education and therefore involves the goal of the Ministry."*
- *"Like they say, it is imposed education ... and there's no other option"*
- *"I think there is another option, the issue here is how to wake up the people here, that is, to start from ourselves, and then more people will support us, I believe."*
- *"To be honest and fair; there are people in the Ministry who have 'good intentions, there is a disposition to adapt the school curricula to the local needs, but what complicates this situation is that the people in the Ministry are always changing."*

The present research focused on creating knowledge grounded in the perspectives of participants, and their experiences highlight the impacts of the national policy framework in which indigenous education stands. In this story, the framework for the development of an indigenous education has historically defined what is considered 'relevant' in Chilean educational policies. In the last three decades, this framework has assumed the responsibility of school today in language regeneration, language teaching and creation of local content. Yet this responsibility competes with other demands on the school.

The difference of opinion between parents and participants who work in school show differing perceptions of the educational system. The school's perspective has a persistent focus on the limitations that legal constraints impose, and therefore highlight the connection between legal recognition of an indigenous education agenda at a national level, and the community's acceptance of the programme.

This is important because the introduction of policies aimed to address the

the state's 'historical debt' with the indigenous people in the realm of education, the EIB policies in Chile, have determined what is possible for Rapa Nui participants to 'aspire to' in terms of a nation-wide recognition. As can be seen in the stories of chapter 5, in some situations political support for indigenous education was forthcoming and in others, it was not; forcing the efforts toward a Rapa Nui curriculum to use liminal spaces left 'in between policies'.

As has been highlighted by research focused on the policies of EIB in Chile (Montecinos, 2004; Riedemann, 2008), that the legal instruments fail to recognize indigenous knowledge as a necessary part of the Chilean curriculum, that goes beyond 'decontextualised cultural content'. In words of Riedemann;

*"The conception that emanates from the state policy on intercultural education in Chile; is that this concept is synonymous with education for the indigenous" (Riedemann, 2008, p. 170).*

EIB in Chile is only binding for 'areas of high indigenous concentration', according to the definitions of the Law Nº 19253 of 1993. This denotes a crucial difference between EIB 'for the indigenous' and 'indigenous education', as can be defined through the stories that this research presents. This fundamental contradiction has not only been recognized by academics, but is also present in the efforts of civil and indigenous organizations working towards a meaningful EIB, such as the "Red EIB<sup>123</sup>", whose slogan is "intercultural education for all, bilingual for the indigenous". Further, a report prepared in 2011 for the 'special commission of Indigenous Peoples of the Chamber of Deputies of Chile' concludes as follows:

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<sup>123</sup> 'Network for Educational and Linguistic Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Chile'; Letter to the president of the Chilean senate, and other authorities. May 30 2008. Available in <http://redeibchile.blogspot.co.nz>. Retrieved May 22, 2014.

*“The strengthening and promotion of these [indigenous] languages is a task that is not only the responsibility of the educational field, it requires the generation of a comprehensive policy of recognition and promotion that tends to normalize and facilitate language learning in communitarian, social and institutional spaces, through which reproduction and revitalization can be achieved”<sup>124</sup>”*

These demands have not been yet considered at a national level, but they are valuable because they stem from the appropriation of EIB goals performed by indigenous people and through the establishment of partnerships with the Chilean state. The common goal of this partnership has been broadly defined as the "improving learning achievement, through strengthening ethnic identity of children in contexts of cultural and linguistic diversity" (PEIB Guidelines, 2005); a definition that has been called for through local interpretations.

In the context of this research, the relationship that the school establishes with the Ministry of Education today is heavily channelled through the department of EIB, understood as a 'door':

*“Well, always thinking it could be a door towards the possibility of going towards what we wanted, through EIB. It is good that this possibility exists, now that it satisfies completely [our goals], well... in the beginning they did not understand the subject very well, they had a very diffuse proposal; not knowing how to approach indigenous education [in the island]. And that is also why we held on to the immersion program, because we believed that all we worked through with children should be constructed in our language - that the children had to build their learning in our language. If not, it was another*

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<sup>124</sup> The report on the situation of the native languages of Chile'; does not specify authors. "Situación de las lenguas originarias de Chile". It is dated June 30, 2011 (p. 1). Available in the Library of National Congress of Chile: [www.bcn.cl](http://www.bcn.cl). Retrieved June 2, 2013.

*subject, and the children would be unable to speak, to develop it every day, in their daily lives. And the idea was that the child appropriated the language, especially if they were coming preferably from a Spanish language [background]; we had to submerge him or her in the language to get a result that would give us some satisfaction in what we were proposing”.*

The possibilities offered by public policies have been readily appropriated by the school whenever they offered a valuable ‘space’ for Rapa Nui language and knowledge. As the participant’s voices recall, there have been situations in which EIB, as an institutional policy, was considered an ally in the creation of a local curriculum. The ‘Indigenous Language’ learning area was approved as part of the national curriculum for primary education in 2006, giving legal status to the development of study programmes in indigenous contexts. It is structured along two axes: “Orality and Written Communication, both oriented towards teaching, promotion and valorization of indigenous languages”<sup>125</sup>. Three years later, study programmes for three of the nine indigenous groups recognized by the Chilean Indigenous Law of 1993, were approved by the National Council of Education (Aymara, Mapuche and Rapa Nui)<sup>126</sup>.

Based on the EIB propositions, the school team drew on cultural content to develop the study programmes for Rapa Nui Indigenous language. This gave birth to the respective study programmes for Rapa Nui Language, developed

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<sup>125</sup> Sector Lengua Indígena. Objetivos Fundamentales y Contenidos Mínimos (Mineduc 2006, p. 2).

<sup>126</sup> ‘Consejo Nacional de Educación’ (CNED) created by the General Law of Education Nº 20.370, enacted in 2009. It is an autonomous entity with legal attributions to approve the proposals of the Ministry of Education concerning the “curricular bases for preschool, primary education, and secondary education; including modalities of adult and special needs education and other modalities that may be created. It must also approve the respective plans and programs of study; the evaluation plan of learning objectives; and report on the standards of qualification and promotion, and on quality standards” (source: <http://www.cned.cl>).

between 2008 and 2009.

*“We had to follow the structure of the national curriculum”. “Expected learnings, vertical objectives, transversal objectives and compulsory minimum content: every school was expected to comply –at least - with these”.*

The curricular framework referred to here became obsolete with the 2009 ‘general law on education’ (LGE) that replaced the vertical objectives, transversal objectives, and compulsory minimum content with new compulsory learning objectives: ‘Objetivos de Aprendizaje’ (OA<sup>127</sup>). In a broad perspective, the educational development agenda historically carried out by the Chilean administrations has been strongly influenced by social movements<sup>128</sup>. Recently, the re-elected President of Chile, Michelle Bachelet, has announced major changes projected for the state’s current agenda in wide-ranging issues: a constitutional reform<sup>129</sup>, a tributary reform and a educational reform that could bring about major changes in the Chilean policies<sup>130</sup>.

From the perspectives of participants, the local aspirations have not been yet seriously considered:

*“One goes in and the other comes out, and finally education has been moving according to social problems generated in Santiago. And what about the rest? The rest is in their world, very isolated and in a very different reality, so decisions are made around controversy generated*

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<sup>127</sup> Law N° 20.370

<sup>128</sup> The Law N°20.370 is the result of the negotiations carried out after the so-called ‘Revolución de los Pingüinos’ of 2006. See for example, Cabalin 2012.

<sup>129</sup> Though with amendments, the current constitution was imposed in 1980 by the military government.

<sup>130</sup> This was pronounced in the ‘Discurso del 21 de Mayo’ 2014, by Michelle Bachelet. This is an annual speech made by the President of the Republic of Chile. It is a public ceremony in which the President gives account of the administrative and political state of the nation.

*in Santiago, many times disregarding the rest. So while there is no stability in terms of political vision, we cannot reach stability and therefore we have to continue to be assessed”.*

While there has been some support from the Ministry, there has also been instability in political support, financing and assessment.

*“Intercultural bilingual education projects, EIB as it is called, has two areas: primary, and early childhood education; and they have different funding; Mineduc and CONADI respectively”.*

The ambiguity in policy can also be seen in the instability of funding for the programme, which relates to economical support given through subsidies, projects and other ways of political support. The nature of individual salaries fostering individual work, rather than collaborative work among teachers, staff and parents, has implications for the collaboration needed for such a programme. These salaries do not always consider the sum of working hours that such an endeavour requires, imposing extra work on top of the weekly hours of teaching. This could be seen as discouragement for working within the programme, which also makes it difficult to set long term goals and to strengthen the school team.

*“In 2006 we started with the Rapa Nui teachers to develop the learning area of indigenous language. In school there had been some progress made by the teachers themselves; they had previously developed a curricular framework for what we call the Rapa Nui Language learning area, and these contents had been approved, although they were not considered in the national curriculum... this had been developed and approved but only from the perspective of the school; it had not been reviewed or endorsed by the National Council of Education [CNED] or anything like that... because there was no capacity to do so; not even in the Department of EIB of the Ministry. So this was something that*



*started as an initiative of the school itself and the Rapa Nui teachers within it. After that came the creation of the EIB department in the ministry at the central level, and more communication about the topic of intercultural education circulated. It took as about three years until we completed fourth grade. And last year all of these programs have been approved. We had prepared these plans and programs well in time so these documents were reviewed by the Department of EIB, through a linguist from the University of Chile who managed the curricular subject, a person who worked with us and everything.”*

This task, at the school level, is largely held under the responsibility of the ‘technical’ co-ordinator of the teacher’s department, in charge of mediating between ‘cultural contents’ and Ministry guidelines.

*“My role has been to be the technical coordinator of the four study programs. I mean, I worked with the Department in terms of what are the cultural contents that we want to want to prioritize, what wants to be taught; and it has been my role to assemble the programmes in curricular terms and according to matrices delivered by the Ministry”.*

Currently, four levels (up to grade 4) have been approved and validated by the national council of education CNED, which further strengthened the legitimacy of the Rapa Nui indigenous education programme as an official learning alternative that is culturally relevant. However, the process of ‘legitimation’ -in terms of Bishop & Glynn (1999) - that these study programmes have to go through, presents many challenges that have not been resolved. Beneath this discussion of ambiguity and instability in the political support to indigenous education, lie pressing questions that are posed by a participant as:

*“How can the Rapa Nui community teach students of their language and culture with integrity; in such a way that teaching practices align*

*with their own knowledge, and ways of seeing the world? How can this be acknowledged and validated by the state of Chile?”*

I might add: how can it be validated by the Rapa Nui community?

This is a story of struggle. It presents the experiences of integrating indigenous language and knowledge in school (practices, curriculum) along with the compliance with a national policies framework. Agreements came usually as a product of negotiation with Chilean authorities and local agency within boundaries of a legal framework. Important advancements have been achieved, yet through ongoing negotiation with national authorities; frameworks, assessment regimes and policies. This brings to the forefront the challenges of representation (Bishop & Glynn, 1999) that the Rapa Nui people face today in the Chilean curriculum.

*“Here we are building on the subject of language, culture and history through school; but if it started in the year 2000 with total immersion, it soon started to decrease hours of Rapa Nui language, because had to place more hours in Spanish. Then in 2008 an improvement plan came; but this improvement plan was in Spanish language; therefore us teachers had to incorporate more Spanish hours to the immersion program. So, although there are people with good will working in the Ministry, on the other hand you receive other requirements coming from the same Ministry. This ambiguity does not lead us to our end goal”.*

### **Parents freedom to choose**

#### Dialogue 3

- *“Even Rapa Nui parents, being both speakers and therefore having the opportunity to transmit their language; they speak Spanish to their children because of social pressure and school...”*

- *“The year ‘81, we surveyed the topic with Hilaria. That is why we created Te Mahana o te Reo; precisely to call for the consciousness of parents, families, the elderly. That they could collaborate with what the school was doing, because the school has been like a space where it has worked systematically teaching the language, but even then we had difficulties. And 20 years later, today I feel the problem is much deeper; language has already lost so much self-esteem that children will prefer another class than Rapa Nui to work. So what is the issue for us, we have to restructure and seek resources that will attract children, how technology... and unfortunately there is also a social issue at this time, that we will not be able to address. And I find it interesting that research is done to see if [our work] will come to fruition”.*

In contrast to the ‘school stories’, the parents’ perspective of the spaces available for Rapa Nui knowledge in school is somewhat detached from the legal constraints, assumes that the responsibility for their children’s successful education lies within the school, and illustrates a tendency to ‘delegate’ their responsibility in providing for a quality education.

The SIMCE test has been pushed forward increasingly in the past few decades, utilised by the successive Chilean governments to define ‘quality education’ through widespread media coverage. This is consistent with the neoliberal policies devised by the so-called ‘Chicago Boys’, which were applied in different ‘neoliberal experiments’ in the 80’s and 90’s in different countries. The publication of results and rankings of schools according to SIMCE results relies on the assumption that parents will ‘rationally choose’ the best school for their children in terms of quality, as defined by SIMCE scores. This is evident in the policies promoted by former Minister of Education Joaquín Lavín, known as the ‘traffic lights’; which has resulted in

the closure of schools scoring low in these rankings<sup>131</sup>.

The introduction of the SIMCE implies the validation of certain learning areas as ‘more important than others’, through what it tests and what it leaves out. The introduction of the SIMCE in the 1980’s as a national standard test for primary and secondary education in Chile, has reduced capacity to provide for indigenous education, resulting in an invisibilization of locally rooted culture and values at a national level. This is even more pronounced when taken into account with international rankings of educational achievement.

On an international level, literacy, numeracy and science testing, through the PISA tests (Programme for International Student Assessment), TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) and PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) have been also introduced to measure the quality of a nation’s education system. The proliferation of these tests around the ‘basics’ of literacy, numeracy and science has allowed global organisations to choose the criteria by which education systems are valued. The international testing has filtered down into the local environment through high stakes testing such as SIMCE; which delivers a ranking of schools, thus encouraging competition against each other. The increased focus on measurement is a means for governments to “steer at a distance” (Lingard & Sellar, 2013). Teachers, students and schools self-monitor their performance against criteria that have been advertised. They can then assess themselves and their contribution. They can also compare their performance with others, resulting in a form of surveillance where we monitor ourselves but also each other constantly.

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<sup>131</sup> This has called for reaction from those affected, affirming that inequity in Chilean education is not part of the school, but part of the educational system as a whole; and should be treated as such. Further information can be found through the work of a nation-wide network created recently, under the name *Alto al SIMCE* (‘stop the SIMCE’).

This development has affected the indigenous education programme significantly. According to the participants, the evaluation methods of SIMCE focus on competence and abilities; more focused towards memory skills over comprehension. Overall the notion of national standards and assessments lacks encouragement of diversity and creativity. They also pay little attention to the particular learning process of individual students. When comparing two different children through a same rule, one is bound to win and one to lose. The same is valid for languages in competition, which implies that SIMCE fails by assuming ‘neutrality’, which results in deficit theorizing of the work of teachers and parents.

*“What happens is that there are employees who come for two or three years, and they come with concepts: ‘the quality of education must be raised, because the schools in Easter Island according to SIMCE or PSU scores is bad’. So categorical. But I could tell them... will we improve the quality of people? Is it not best to search for people, connect with people and then train them and guide them to find a SIMCE result?”*

This political pressure meant that by 2010, the only class being taught entirely in Rapa Nui was a kindergarten. At the community level, indigenous education, and particularly the immersion programme was discredited arguing that “that the immersion programme had no official authorization from the Chilean Ministry of Education”, and that “the financial support received from the State was for intercultural policies and not immersion” (March, 2010<sup>132</sup>). The consequences of such an interpretation demanded parents to ‘fight’ for the recognition of the positive outcomes that the indigenous education program had reported to them. This discussion was finished when the Ministry of Education signed a

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<sup>132</sup> Local newspaper, Tāpura Re'o, March 2011. Available in:  
<http://issuu.com/marcusedensky/docs/120804101218-84edba3c3f674912bb4e359ccd902bb5/1?e=5724764/6194693>

cooperation agreement in 2011, agreeing to support the indigenous education program until 2014. While recognition at a government level of the indigenous education programme in the school was a step forward, all the participants recognize that this is not enough; as funding is unstable funding and final aspirations are incoherent:

*“Now there is a rather ambiguous situation, in the sense that although there are people in the Ministry with disposition to work with indigenous education in school. But on the other hand, what are the children required to do? They are required to sit through SIMCE tests, they tell us to do our curriculum according to context; but what is the content through which our children are measured? Now our children are not only measured with a scale according to the local context of their learning process, they are also measured by comparing with the children of the continent that live in a Spanish speaking context. The construction of their learning is made in Spanish, as given by the Ministry.”*

The illustration of the conflicting policy reforms, and the efforts of the teachers and mediator to make programmes comply with them, shows the added difficulty of indigenous education. It has produced compliance through fear and insecurity of parents and teachers, leading to Spanish teaching rather than in Rapa Nui.

- *“I believe that... quality from the point of view of a continental concept is a heartbreak. Because it establishes social differences, competition; other aspects...”*
- *“Winners and losers?”*
- *“There are indicators that maybe are not rendering our reality, etc. So will the state, and perhaps the government in power at the time, be in accordance with this policy? Shouldn't this community assessment policy be managed internally maybe?”*

- *“The issue of evaluation is important, and to the extent that, although these discussions are taking place; one listens to the people, teachers, schools and you see that the state is placing more and more SIMCE tests. It seems that there is no progress in the same direction in this regard.”*

Standardization fails to teach students about meaningful aspects of ‘their own’ cultural or social life, and fails to consider alternative learning paths toward ‘success.’ One of the basic assumptions within public policies in neoliberal countries such as Aotearoa, New Zealand or Chile, is that “education should mainly support individualistic and nationalistic competition in the global economy and that an educational competition of winners and losers is in the best interest of public life in a diverse society” (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 3).

Building upon the learning obtained through this research, I believe that this assumption promotes a self-fulfilling cycle of underachievement and socio-economic marginalization (G. H. Smith, 2003, p. 24); where these ‘winners and losers’ do not vary substantially throughout the years. Aside from this, in the local context of Rapa Nui, the ‘usefulness’ of an assessment regime and curriculum content that has been decided in Santiago is being seriously questioned.

*“In a meeting with everyone here he said ‘I want this school to forget about SIMCE and continue teaching as it has always done’, because he is confident that this school educates good citizens... This school aims towards dealing with children more than anything through affection. Here we have children got rejected from other schools, but we also have very good students”.*

Issues such as affection, identity and values are not part of the equation of SIMCE measurements, however the teachers believe they have profound

consequences in the achievement of their students. In this sense, SIMCE is not assessing a culturally responsive education for the school. In the words of the principal:

*“I don’t have SIMCE scores, I have students”.*

This is not necessarily the point of view of the Chilean formal educational system, which is sustained through a narrow definition of ‘quality’ limited by SIMCE tests. This is arguable that the SIMCE scores are guide the ‘rational choices’ of parents in the search for the ‘best school’ for their children. This equals a definition of a market based educational system; where schools can be measured in terms of their efficiency in achieving good scores. The parents ‘freedom to choose’ is therefore utterly limited to a scale from best to worst of the same achievements; similar to the choice of a product to satisfy a desire.

Apart from the decision of where their children can, should or must be enrolled; the actual spaces of participation within the school appear to be limited by what can be typified as ‘the spaces to complain or approve.’ Through these spaces, the participants’ voices manifest have achieved good things for the school’s process. From a broader perspective, however, the participation of parents in curriculum development is not as yet encouraged by the policies that give structure to the education system in Chile. Finally, and however insufficient the participation spaces for parents might be, this is not to doubt if they influence the course of events; but rather propose that the pathways offered, are not currently engaging them in the educational process of their children.

### **The problem of legitimation and actual challenges**

The major challenges of the indigenous education programme in school today is related to the projection of this programme, and the participants’ knowledge, into the future. There is a need to increase gradually the levels



at which the indigenous education programme is provided, to strengthen the learning process for students. This challenge is added to by concerns about the validity of teachers' knowledge and a complex debate about qualifications needed to teach indigenous education.

*"But you know, nowadays everything is through status, by papers so until they have no qualification... not even in here!"*

There is a perceived lack of professionalism in some teachers. It is seen that they might not implement the programme. While some of this may be so, this also relates to a general devaluation of the teaching role in Chile. In some ways it has been reduced to the technical. The need for qualifications has led many community members to question teachers' right to teach, while at the same time it has undermined their own capacity to teach Rapa Nui culture and language in the community context.

*"Because teachers are not qualified, they do not have a good perception from the community. Then what happens is that immersion in pre-kinder [early childhood] has twenty eight to thirty boys and girls; and in kindergarten there are thirty four in total. And when they progress to year one, the enrolment comes down to twelve or fifteen... Parents want their children to be in immersion while they are toddlers, but it's like they don't have the security that their kids will... because parents are kind of unconscious in the sense that by second year they expect their child to be reading, writing and doing mathematical operations, as a way of saying. But the process of immersion is a little different. First orally and then in third and fourth year we focus on giving them effective reading and writing skills, but no, they want it to be like the Hispanic system. This is something that bothers us because it we lose the efforts, the continuity."*

Thus, one of the main issues for the future, is to train enough Rapa Nui

teachers and train them to address teaching and learning of Rapa Nui language; but also to position this work in a prominent place. The lack of teachers is particularly urgent in order to increase the immersion programme to the next level and address the lack of teaching materials in Rapa Nui language: “That today is our shortcoming, our deficit, our weakness.” So the cycle of placing untrained teachers in the classroom in the immersion programme, impacts on perceptions of it and this impacts on the school’s ability to maintain it. Also this discussion and questioning is connected to teachers’ need to study at a distance to remain on the island, calling the value of their qualification to account in comparison to those who have left to gain their qualifications.

*“But that is not enough because you know that taking distance learning is not the same as spending five years at the university, so the teachers of the Department are not as competent with the technicalities; like assuming the teaching responsibility with planning, assessment methods and everything well-structured so that the school processes can be strengthened”.*

The qualification and training of new teachers who can teach in the immersion programme continues to influence power-sharing in school. This also complicates the validation of cultural knowledge in the educational setting. There is a separation between expert (qualification based) knowledge and the cultural knowledge that may be held within the indigenous group, which further justifies the exclusion of the local community (and parents) from school.

*“Because the programmes are made in such a way that anybody with 3 fingers of forehead sees it, and says “ok, this is what I have to do”.*

This discussion delivers important learnings in the necessity to bring dialogue into capacity building, to create places where these can be worked

through in terms of local desires and hopes. It outlines the problem of unilateral flows of information and further imposition on those who have already been imposed upon. The ongoing debates regarding qualifications, the authorization to educate and the legitimization of mainland knowledge over local and indigenous knowledge illustrate the need to allow places for the development of pathways toward validation of indigenous knowledge, for indigenous education to prosper.

One of the main criticisms of the programme (or the struggles) is the tendency to reduce it to second language teaching. This focuses on the translation of Spanish school texts into Rapa Nui and mainly on technical and grammatical aspects of the native language. This kind of teaching leads to incoherence and more generally to a lack of spaces for Rapa Nui knowledge to flourish. The participants are generally aware of a threat that Rapa Nui knowledge is exposed to within the school institution. They have named it in their interviews ‘simplification’ or ‘folklorization’ of Rapa Nui knowledge, or ‘literal translation’ of the study programmes developed in the mainland. However, they explain it in different ways.

*“I see the immersion programme is well focused and objectified, however it must avoid going towards simplification. A small translation of something from continental [Spanish] to Rapa Nui without providing the broader concept that immersion is seeking”*

Also there is a tendency to focus on skills that are predominantly Spanish or culturally not in line with traditional Rapa Nui ways of communicating and learning.

*“What is happening today, teachers are neglecting oral language and are focusing on strengthening written over oral communication... in Rapa Nui, but they use the Hispanic format that is based on activities*

*developed from a Hispanic point of view... like a copy, which they translate and apply, and teachers have realized that is their weakness”.*

This illustrates the need for a more culturally sound pedagogy for teaching Rapa Nui knowledge; as well as language that allows the local environment to be a setting for meaningful learning.

*“As has been said; it is not enough with the ‘iorana pehē koe’, we need to get more. The concept of communication in Rapa Nui are words and phrases... as Hilaria would have said, it is a worldview that has to be present in the community; take education outside of school! I think that is the issue: how are we going to be able to get the community to accept that educators have to leave schools with their children, to learn outside. And not entrap educators. That’s my personal experience”.*

Finally, there is a need to create language workshops with parents, so that there is a continuity of language use at home, reinforcing results at school.

All in all; the challenge here is to create a story capable of integrating all these experiences, aspirations and, desires; while giving privileged voice to Rapa Nui knowledge. That story of course, is not mine to write; but I have attempted here to make a contribution in the creation of new pathways toward knowledge, that allows a wider range of meanings to be developed.

## Chapter 7. The seed of hope

In my own writing of this thesis, the implied challenge has become evident, while attempting to focus on meanings created in different languages, from different positions in the world. This challenge, however, has also allowed me great learning.

Central to indigenization is the process of deconstructing and externalizing the myth of the indigenous as the ‘intellectually inferior’; while simultaneously centering indigenous worldviews (Walters & Simoni, 2009).

The voices that in this research speak, express optimism about recent developments, where parents have positively engaged with the school’s indigenous programme, and foresee renewed possibilities of communication aimed towards cooperation. However their stories imply that these pathways of communication do not involve, at the moment, collaborative strategies for the development of a Rapa Nui indigenous curriculum.

Linda Smith explained that decolonizing research is not simply about making minor refinements; instead, it is a “much broader but still purposeful agenda for transforming the institution of research, the deep underlying structures and taken-for- granted ways of organizing, conducting, and disseminating research knowledge” (1999, p. 88).

### Final Dialogue

*- “This happens everywhere in the world, of the more than seven thousand languages, it is estimated that a fourth are in danger of extinction. What happens is that one can not point the finger and say the school is a factor, or this is another factor. It is a whole set of factors that has brought these people to leave their own language. Being realistic and honest, I believe that behind all the factors that*

*influence loss of language; one major factor that pertains the whole society, is when they begin to see that their language is not profitable. It is harsh to say it like this, but when they all come to the conclusion that for a person to be educated, to go out of the island, become a professional and get a job here and there; it is necessary to acquire another language, then they go in that direction. And that is what happens today. Parents, with these reasons, and perhaps rightly too, have wanted their children to be educated and go out [of the island] and get jobs, but it is impossible if you only speak Rapa Nui language. We have always said that the island has all the conditions for the two languages to coexist; for people to be bilingual, fluent in both languages and that there is no reason why not; but that's an attitude problem at the community level*

*- And not the authority?*

*- That idea of going with the dollar sign ahead, I cannot conceive of something that is a gift from our ancestors, that the essence of language is part of being, I cannot put it in that situation that it is profitable as you were saying.”*

Ultimately the history of exclusion for Rapa Nui families, language and culture from their children's education has resulted in a lack of value in what families can provide in terms of learning opportunities for their children: this is what should be primarily addressed.

*“Because generally I have seen that today the government invests a lot of money! Lots of money to preserve the language, but those resources that are invested, do not bear fruit.... They want Rapa Nui to be spoken, to teach children to speak Rapa Nui, but according to the plans and programmes given by the Ministry of Education. They already have an idea of what needs to be taught in school, and all that, for the teachers here to translate into Rapa Nui language. It's not the same! It is not the same as a plan and programme made by the people.*

*The Rapa Nui people, the community itself should make a plan and programme to be taught”.*

*“I have often thought, putting myself on the other side; what if Rapa Nui language and culture is lost? Who will take the blame for this? Those who at some point had in their hands the power of taking action towards change. But once it is lost, can it be recovered? Is the situation reversible? I have seen it like this: if the responsibility is not taken by Rapa Nui people and by the others; this will be lost. So the north is that the two sides charge batteries and go to that north”.*

For the participants, the immersion programme is the seed, the hope for the future in a local context that is forever changed by colonization. The hope that through authentic local agency in curriculum development, a curriculum can be developed that reflects a community’s belief and commitment to the ongoing life of its language and ways of being. Unlike the barrenness of an imported curriculum, it could incorporate essential notions of respect for the environment, people and cultural symbolism. Such a programme would affirm understanding of these concepts not as ‘the product of a cultural expression’, but as a foundation. This brings us closer to a perspective on the structural elements of culture that must be considered both in education and in social life in general. And so the struggle to maintain hope and commitment for Rapa Nui culture and language continues.

The history of colonization has been ever present in the silencing of Rapa Nui voices in every aspect of telling of cultural life. “Culture,” says Hilaria Tuki Pakarati, “means ways of being, your way of being. This way of being is my way of living from day-to-day. That is what culture is. They don’t allow it to us” (Delsing, 2009, p. 296). While a Rapa Nui history created in ‘absence’ of the Rapa Nui people doesn’t make sense, it could be said that Rapa Nui voices have been persistently silenced. Researchers in the past

have taken stories of the Rapa Nui and ‘submerged them within their own stories and retold these reconstituted stories in a language and culture determined by the researcher” (Bishop, 1996, p. 23). It is my hope that, within my constraints, this work adds to the development of a space where Rapa Nui voices are heard, to enable meaningful and constructive dialogues.



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## Appendices

## Appendix A: Letter of introduction

**Department of Professional  
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Dear [name]:

[School name and address]

My name is Camila Zurob and I am currently studying to obtain a Masters of Education in the University of Waikato, Aotearoa/New Zealand. This letter is an invitation for you and your school to be involved in research that I will do as part of my thesis, which considers fieldwork in Rapa Nui from July to September of this year. The goal for my thesis is to learn about the possibilities of working towards a curriculum based on indigenous knowledge in a school setting, through collaboration with parents.

I am aware that you have an important experience in intercultural education programmes, and I believe your interest in incorporating Rapa Nui knowledge into curriculum comprises a valuable account of community integration in formal education. My key interest is to conceive a plausible model of collaboration between school staff and parents, with the goal of creating a relevant curriculum that caters for local knowledge and values.

Should you consent to your school participating in the project I would like to invite you, other members of your staff and parents who may be interested in participating, to a research workshop where the focus will be on devising appropriate ways of working collaboratively towards a Rapa Nui based curriculum. I would also like to interview you and other participants in this activity about their perspectives, experiences and aspirations for the development of a curriculum based on indigenous knowledge, devised through collaboration. If possible, I would also like to access your school's policies, plans or documentation regarding curriculum development and modes of engagement with the local community.

This project has been approved by the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee of the University of Waikato in Aotearoa/New Zealand. As this will develop into a Thesis report to be submitted to the University of Waikato in March 2014, you must be aware that an electronic copy of the thesis will become widely available in English language, as

the University of Waikato requires that a digital copy of Masters theses will be lodged permanently in the University's digital repository: Research Commons. The school and participants' identities' will be kept confidential and carefully selected pseudonyms will be used in the thesis report. The only people who would know the identity of participants would be myself and my supervisor, Margie Hōhepa, who will be providing guidance through the research. As you, your school staff and other community members are known to each other, anonymity cannot be absolutely guaranteed in the school and community context. However it is hoped that all participants maintain confidentiality out of respect for each others' involvement.

After the interviews have taken place, I will send you the transcription of what was spoken (or you can hear the recording if you prefer), so that you can delete or add information if you deem necessary. You will have 2 weeks to return the written transcription to me. The same procedure will be followed with all other interviewed participants.

If the school or any individual participant wishes to withdraw from the research, you (or they) can do so at any stage, until data collection has been completed and the transcripts have been approved by participants. In this situation you (or they) would need to contact me directly on the phone number or email provided at the end of this letter.

I will return to the school after the examination of the thesis, to organize with the participants a procedure to share the research findings. This will involve translation of the thesis or parts of it to ensure the participants have access to findings. A copy of the final thesis will be given to interested participants. Research findings may also be used later to prepare papers and conference presentations on this research.

You will find three attachments to this letter. The first is a proposed schedule for the research workshop. Your comments and suggestions will be appreciated so this activity meets your current interests and time schedules. The second is a copy of the kinds of questions that I would like to ask in the interviews. As these will be semi-structured interviews, please be aware that other questions that arise during the course of the interview may be asked. The third attachment is a return slip that you would need to complete and return to me. Under no circumstances should you or any other invited participants feel compelled to participate in the research and related activities (interviews or workshop) and proper consent for the use of data in my thesis will be sought for each of the participants involved.

Through this study it is hoped that the roles of the the principal, school staff, teachers and parents are clarified for the Rapa Nui community; policies and procedures which are not

transparent may be addressed and empower greater involvement between teachers and parents in driving better outcomes for their children.

I hope this letter and the following attachments give you enough information to make an informed choice, and I would be happy to be contacted if you have any questions or comments. My contact details are at the end of this letter, and you can also contact Margie Hohepa via email on [mkhohepa@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:mkhohepa@waikato.ac.nz).

Māuru-uru



Camila Zurob Dreckmann

Email: [camilazurob@gmail.com](mailto:camilazurob@gmail.com)

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## Appendix B: Invitation and proposed schedule of Research Workshop

Dear [participants' name]

This invitation is part of my research, where my goal is to provide you with more detailed information about my current project and discuss any concerns or questions you may have.

I also want to present my knowledge on research and indigenous research methodologies that I believe will be of interest for you as educators in Rapa Nui. I will also present part of my literature review drawing examples of my own experience working in the island, to illustrate how these methodologies can be useful to foster a collaborative work drawing upon your own knowledge in pedagogic planning and practice.

Mai he tātou e haka 'ite ki te ŋapoki: possibilities of working collaboratively towards a curriculum based on indigenous knowledge in a school setting

### Research workshop

09:30 – 10:00	Welcome
10:00 – 11:00	Researcher presentation
11:00 – 11:30	Group discussion and morning tea
11:30 – 13:00	Personal activity: what is my experience with research?
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Group work: How can we engage in research to develop a curriculum that caters for Rapa Nui knowledge and world-vision?

It is important that you know that any materials that may be produced during the workshop will not be collected or recorded by me, although I will keep notes of topics that seem relevant for the development of further analysis on the issues we may discuss.

These notes will help me devise appropriate questions for the interviews, and you can access those who concern you if you want. Through this workshop, you will be invited to share your own experience but you must not feel compelled to do so. After the activity has taken place, I will give you a written summary of the day's events.

It is also relevant to point out that any materials or supplies used for this workshop will be provided by the researcher's fieldwork allowance, according to conditions set by NZAID Scholarship. I am open to any questions you may have in relation to how the funding will be managed.

I hope this workshop will be of interest to you, and if you have any questions or comments please contact me through details provided in the letter above.

## Appendix C: Interview schedules

### a) Principal

Should you consent to your personal participation in the research, I would like to have two interviews with you; one before and one after the research workshop has been developed. I expect these interviews to cover the following topics:

- Your views and knowledge, experiences and practices related to educational leadership and the relationships that your school maintains with the Rapa Nui community.
- Your perspective of the current challenges your school faces in curriculum development.
- School initiatives regarding curriculum development and modes of engagement with the local community.
- Aspirations related to improving student achievement, incorporating indigenous knowledge and engaging with the Rapa Nui community.
- How you think research has been useful in the elaboration of school curriculum and how it can be further developed in collaboration with the community. How you think I can (or cannot) contribute in this endeavor, being a non-indigenous researcher.
- The second interview (at final stages of data collection) would be to reassess what the research workshop meant for you as a participant and further reflect on the possibilities of improving school curriculum through collaborative research.

I also expect to interview at least four members of your school staff regarding:

- Their views and their knowledge, experiences and practices related to curriculum development and modes of engagement with the local community.
- School initiatives and roles they have been involved in, regarding curriculum reform and modes of engagement with the local community.
- Aspirations related to improving student achievement and engaging with the Rapa Nui community and knowledge.
- How they think research has been useful in the elaboration of school curriculum and how it can be further developed in collaboration with the community.
- How they think I can (or cannot) contribute in this endeavor, being a non-indigenous researcher.
- A second interview at final stages of data collection, to reassess and further reflect on what the research workshop meant for him/her as a participant.

Finally, interviews to parents will cover the following outline:

- Their modes of engagement with the school and the educational process of their children.
- Their views, experiences and aspirations related to incorporating indigenous knowledge and engaging with the schools and the education of their children.
- How they think research has been useful in the elaboration of school curriculum and how it can be further developed in collaboration with the community.
- How they think I can (or cannot) contribute in this endeavor, being a non-indigenous researcher.
- A second interview at final stages of data collection, to reassess and further reflect on what the research workshop meant for him/her as a participant.

Finally, all these interviews will be arranged at a time and place of each participant's choice. The interview will be audio-recorded and be between thirty to forty five minutes long. Each participant can request for the recorder to be switched off at any time during our interview. The recording of the interview will be transcribed and a copy of the transcript of your interview will be given to you for checking, requesting deletions and adding new information if you choose. I would need to have any changes to the transcript within two weeks of your receiving it. This is valid for all the interviews I will perform in the course of this study.

**b) Teachers and school staff**

Should you consent to participating in the project, I would like to have two interviews with you; one before and one after the research workshop has been developed. I expect these interviews to cover the following topics:

- Your views and their knowledge, experiences and practices related to curriculum development and modes of engagement with the local community.
- School initiatives and roles you have been involved in, regarding curriculum reform and modes of engagement with the local community.
- Your aspirations related to improving student achievement and engaging with the Rapa Nui community and knowledge.
- How you think research has been useful in the elaboration of school curriculum and how it can be further developed in collaboration with the community.
- How you think I can (or cannot) contribute in this endeavor, being a non-indigenous researcher.
- A second interview at final stages of data collection, to reassess and further reflect on what the research workshop meant for you as a participant.

Both of these interviews will be arranged at a time and place of your choosing. The interview will be audio-recorded and be between thirty to forty five minutes long. You can request for the recorder to be switched off at any time during our interview. The recording of the interview will be transcribed and a copy of the transcript will be given to you for checking, requesting deletions and adding new information if you choose. I would need to have any changes to the transcript within two weeks of your receiving it.

**c) Parents**

Should you consent to participating in the project, I would like to have two interviews with you; one before and one after the research workshop has been developed. I expect these interviews to cover the following topics:

- Your modes of engagement with the school and the educational process of your children.
- Their views, experiences and aspirations related to incorporating indigenous knowledge and engaging with the schools and the education of your children.
- How you think research has been useful in the elaboration of school curriculum and how it can be further developed in collaboration with the community.
- How you think I can (or cannot) contribute in this endeavor, being a non-indigenous researcher.
- A second interview at final stages of data collection, to reassess and further reflect on what the research workshop meant for you as a participant.

Both of these interviews will be arranged at a time and place of your choosing. The interview will be audio-recorded and be between thirty to forty five minutes long. You can request for the recorder to be switched off at any time during our interview. The recording of the interview will be transcribed and a copy of the transcript will be given to you for checking, requesting deletions and adding new information if you choose. I would need to have any changes to the transcript within two weeks of your receiving it.

## Appendix D: Participant consent forms

### a) School Consent (Principal)

**Department of Professional Studies  
in Education**

Faculty of Education, *Te Kura Toi  
Tangata*

The University of Waikato

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Phone

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c.nz



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

I have read the Participant Information that Camila Zurob has given relating to her proposed research, entitled "Mai hē tātou e haka 'ite ki te rapoki: possibilities of working collaboratively towards a curriculum based on indigenous knowledge in a school setting."

I understand what the research involves and what will be asked from participants.

I also understand that:

- Our participation as a school and as individuals in the research is voluntary.
- The school may withdraw from the research at any time until collected data has been approved.
- Participants of our school and community will be audiotaped.
- The school may provide copies of any documentation that may be useful in clarifying any points that may arise in the interviews relating to school planning, assessment, reporting to parents, etc.
- Data collected will be kept confidential and securely stored.
- All data will be reported anonymously and the confidentiality of participants will be maintained.
- I can contact Camila Zurob, Margie Hōhepa or my immediate superior if the school has any questions or if any issues come up relating to this research.

Please tick the appropriate options below:

☐ I consent to our school participating in this research

☐ I do not consent to our school participating

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_